

Hafa Adai!

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NMC students to receive federal aid this weekend. **PAGE 3**

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Scheduled testing for COVID-19 available

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

wish to get tested for COVID-19 a chance to schedule a testing appointment.

According to a statement on CHCC's official website, in order to facilitate the COVID-19 testing process, those who wish to get tested have to complete a form. Once completed, a CHCC staff will contact the individual to verify information and schedule an available testing date.

See COVID-19 on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, April 23, 2020

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	136	2	138
Recovered	114	12	126
Active	7	0	7
Deaths	6*	0	6*

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	14	0	14
Recovered	11	0	11
Active	1	0	1
Deaths	2	0	2

*Total includes a sailor from the USS Theodore Roosevelt

**Guam has two new positive COVID-19 cases; Saipan has no new cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

Summit starts to right-size NMI finances

By IVA MAURIN
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REPORTER

As Commonwealth leaders met yesterday in a five-day online summit to discuss the \$65-million revenue shortfall this fiscal year, and the ways in which the government could cut costs to avoid a deficit in the future, one thing is resounding—that politics must be set aside.

See SUMMIT on Page 4



EARTH DAY DURING A PANDEMIC

Cuki Alvarez picks up trash at the American Memorial Park last Wednesday as part of the celebration of Earth Day. Alvarez was joined by his wife, Mariana Alvarez, in picking up trash after doing their daily exercise around the park.

KRIZEL TUAZON

Story on
Page 6

School re-opening in December?

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

The Public School System is looking at resuming classes in schools this December.

In an email from Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada that was sent out to PSS staff, he said the PSS administration is in the



Ada

planning stages of moving forward with the next school year.

Public and private schools typically open for the school year around August and September, but PSS is looking at a later time, around October to December.

Classes in public schools were suspended in the

See SCHOOL on Page 4

AP-NORC poll: States earn more praise for outbreak response

By HANNAH FINGERHUT
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP)—To fight the spread of coronavirus, Americans are confined to their homes and public life is all but shuttered—and a majority say that's the right call. A new survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center

for Public Affairs Research also finds that a wide majority approve of how their state and local governments are responding to the pandemic.

Among other findings in the survey of American adults, conducted April 16-20:

■ Eight in 10 Americans say they favor requiring

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INSIDE



ASIA

The Philippines protests China's declaration that a South China Sea region is its territory.

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WORLD

Germany has found itself well equipped now to weather the coronavirus pandemic.

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SCIENCE & TECH

Iran's Revolutionary Guard reveals a secret military space program with a satellite launch.

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Local

CNMI is ordered to pay \$405.9K for 5 projects

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the NMI designated Judge David O. Carter ordered the CNMI government yesterday to pay Gilbane Federal a total of \$405,899 within 30 days for five Commonwealth Utilities Corp. projects.

Gilbane Federal is the court-appointed project management company that has been tasked to help CUC achieve compliance with Stipulated Order No. 2 projects.

These are court-mandated CUC projects that focus on oil issues and also apply to oil spills and the remediation of the contaminated power plants.

Carter also determined that the total payment required to be made by the Court Registry Account to Gilbane Federal is \$132,547 pursuant to those five projects.

The judge ordered the

Court Registry to wire transfer \$106,907 to Gilbane pursuant to Task Order 16 for Gilbane Federal invoices, and \$25,640 more to Gilbane for the Gross Revenue Tax for invoices of Task Order 16 and four other Task Orders.

Task Order 16 invoices were for the purchase, shipment, and installation of two horizontal cylindrical tanks for CUC's Power Plant 4 in Puerto Rico, to be paid by both court registry and grant funding.

Carter said the CNMI shall pay Gilbane Federal \$22,766 pursuant to Task Order 1 for Gilbane invoices; \$83,736 pursuant to Task Order 10; \$88,714 pursuant to Task Order 12; \$31,077 pursuant to Task Order 13; and \$179,604 pursuant to Task Order 16.

Other ordered payments include: TO 1 invoices for management costs incurred, to be paid by both grant funding and registry funding; TO

10 invoices for Power Plants 1 and 2 waste management costs incurred, to be paid by grant funding; TO 12 invoices for facility drainage improvements for Power Plants 1, 2, and 4 costs incurred, to be paid by grant funding; and TO 13 invoices for Phase 2 facility waste management for Power Plants 1 and 2 costs incurred, to be paid by grant funding.

The U.S. government requested the court to direct that Gilbane Federal be paid for the invoiced costs.

On or before 20 days after each month, the EEMC is required to file and serve the court an invoice of its expenses during the preceding month, including a billing statement and a request for compensation.

Bradley R. O'Brien, senior attorney of the U.S. Department of Justice Environmental Enforcement Section, said the U.S. government finds the invoiced costs to be reasonable and requested the court to direct that payment to be made to the EEMC.



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NMC students to receive federal aid this weekend

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
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REPORTER

The Northern Marianas College began the distribution of federal funds to eligible college students affected by COVID-19 and students are expected to receive the funds in their bank accounts this weekend.

According to NMC interim president Frankie Eliptico, NMC will start distributing the funds to students' bank accounts this weekend and will also start mailing checks. About 1,200 students are expected to receive the assistance. The money is provided under the newly enacted Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act.

"We are thankful that there is going to be some financial relief for students provided by the CARES Act. Our team has been working hard the past few days to make sure

the students have access to the funds in the next few days," said Eliptico.

Full-time students would receive about \$700 while part-time students will receive \$350. Full-time students are those students who have 12 or more credits and part-time are those who have 11 credits and below.

An NMC student who requested anonymity said that the federal aid is a big help since she is a working student whose hours were cut due to COVID-19. "The money benefits me since I can pay all my bills. I am also able to buy food and that's all that matters," she said.

She added that COVID-19 has greatly impacted not just her financial status, but her education as well. However, she still sees COVID-19 as a blessing in disguise since it gives everyone the chance to appreciate the small things in life like quality time with family.

"COVID-19 really affected my education because I learn more efficiently in class and not online. It's hard to catch up, especially during this crucial time since there's so much to worry about like how will I pay my rent, power, car, student loans, etc. Class is one of my happy places because I enjoy being around my peers and my teachers, I enjoy discussing topics I can relate to and enjoy debating what's right and what isn't. But I've also been learning more about myself and how I can make myself a better person. I've been spending more time with the people I love the most and the people who actually care about me, so in a way, this quarantine is a blessing in disguise," she said.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, NMC received confirmation last April 11 from the U.S. Department of Education that a provision in the CARES Act would provide approximately \$1.8 million to the college.

Out of the \$1.8 million that NMC received, \$920,000 is reserved for NMC students whose lives were severely impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak.

CUC: Be mindful of drought conditions

In anticipation of the coming dry weather months that the CNMI is just beginning to experience, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to encourage its customers to think ahead and to anticipate your water service needs over the next several months up and into September.

As you know from past years, dry weather will have an impact on the water table and the aquifers CUC relies on to provide water service 24 hours a day. CUC has had to establish scheduled water hours in areas where the water supply is depleted from over pumping when rainfall is inconsistent to sustain full supply needs. The islands of the CNMI have experienced this problem for many years and it will not be changing any time soon.

As we have done in past years, CUC asks its customers to plan for the following efforts to protect yourselves if and when water restrictions may need to be imposed. Here is a list of ideas for getting prepared:

1. Gather several large containers that can be sealed to secure the chlorinated water from exposure and stored in a dark location out of the direct impact of sunlight. Clean containers before using.

2. Gather several cases of bottled water to assure that everyone in your household has something refreshing when access to water is restricted.

3. Plan on keeping your bathtub clean in case you decide to use that item as a container to store water for washing at the sink, and/or flushing the toilet.

4. Be sure to inspect your

water facilities in your home to eliminate any leaks that may waste water needed for your own use and to avoid spending for water you never get a chance to use.

5. Put up shade curtains over your outdoor plants to reduce watering requirements during the hot part of the day.

6. If you have large 1,000 to 5,000 gallon outdoor water containers, be sure to fill them early to guarantee a water reserve exists and over the next several months, use at least half the water in those tanks every two months to assure the water remains fresh and doesn't go stagnant and refill accordingly when water is available. You may also use the water in those tanks as a holding tank for your everyday water supply needs.

7. If you have a concrete tank for your home, be sure it is cleaned annually prior to the dry weather months and chlorinated to assure it is safe to use.

8. If you have a hot water tank, they need to be drained once a year to eliminate the build-up of material that falls out of solution (i.e., calcium, iron, manganese). First, turn off the power supply and the water source. Then drain by attaching a hose to the faucet on bottom side of tank and running it outside to the grass or to the nearest drain. Once drained, turn on the water source and gradually shut the faucet on tank. Allow to fill and then turn on heat source.

9. Get the latest information on CUC water services and potential scheduled water interruptions on the CUC website or Facebook page. (PR)




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SUMMIT

From Page 1

For the first time, according to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, the CNMI is congregating to right the direction of its finances, after the accumulation of obligations, expenses, and practices that have been left unchecked since the Trust Territory government of the '70s.

“We have all voiced at one time or another our thoughts on needs for reform, that the government is too bloated, that we must reduce expenses, that we must increase revenue. Now, this is the time to put these thoughts into action,” he said in his opening remarks.

The governor extended an olive branch, and expressed optimism that all can come to a mutual understanding, and work together, to address the issues that has befallen CNMI.

“I believe we can do it, and I look forward to working towards coming together, both public and private, minority and majority, to put our community first and charting our path forward together,” he said.

The governor called for the fiscal summit, in coordination with the Fiscal Response Task Force and Graduate School USA, to provide for an avenue for the islands’ leaders and stakeholders to work collaboratively on policy options in response to the fiscal crisis in the CNMI.

‘The fiscal crisis is real’

“I would like the working group to consider the fiscal crisis—that it is real.”

Thus said Senate President Victor B. Hocog (R-Rota) who urged the CNMI’s political and business leaders to acknowledge the fiscal crisis, and the bloated govern-

ment that needs to be seriously worked on.

In his opening statement, Hocog stressed the need to review the size of government, to ensure the right size for the government, without hampering the services for the people of the CNMI, and called for the review and merging of departments and programs that show duplication of function.

The Senate president also proposed to consider reducing the number of lawmakers, and that every law must be evaluated for its impact to ensure that no financial burden will be added to the government without proper funding.

Hocog also asked the working group to “properly budget our law enforcement departments, and either provide adequate funding for overtime, or hire more officers to protect our community.”

He also recommended addressing the medical referral program, the creation of a Department of Information Technology, and the need to require the CNMI government to build a rainy day fund to get through disasters and other emergencies.

Respetu yan inaguiaaya

“Shutdown cannot be an option because access to justice is crucial to our people today more than ever,” said Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro. “...The people need the court system to seek justice, to preserve human dignity, and to uphold order, peace, and good governance.”

He reminded government officials that in the performance of its duty, they must apply the norms and values of “*respetu yan inaguiaaya*,” by preserving the principle of checks and balances, and by adhering to the doctrine of separation of powers.

“For the Commonwealth to func-

tion smoothly as intended by the U.S. and CNMI constitutions, the Judiciary must be treated at all times as co-equal with and independent of the executive and legislative branches, and not as a department, agency, or instrumentality of the CNMI government,” he added.

Castro said the recent budget cut of 48% “pierces the heart of the Judiciary’s independence” as it effectively shuts down the third branch of government.

“Our fiscal projection indicates that it would be an impossibility for the court to perform its constitutional and statutory duties—no one will be left to supervise the probationers; the Drug Court will cease to exist; the Family Court Division services will come to a complete halt,” he said.

The public will no longer have access to official and pertinent documents, and that the doors of Koten Tinian and Centron Hustisia on Rota will also be closed to the people. “With restrictions in movement due to COVID-19, domestic violence and sexual abuse are likely to surge. Lost income and unemployment may lead to a rise in property crimes. Without adequate treatment and supervision, drug court participants are already relapsing.”

In proposing ideas to help the government, Castro recommended that the legislative and judicial branches be given a lump sum budget, with 100% reprogramming authority, for both branches to be provided greater flexibility in addressing its internal needs.

He also recommended changing the Office of Management and Budget’s system of monthly budget allocation, stressing that the system amounts to the micro-managing of funds that have already been appropriated.

equipment for doctors, nurses, medical workers, and first responders.

Present with Torres while waiting for the cargo to arrive was Todd Hoose from the Federal Emergency Management Agency external affairs, FEMA COVID-19 response. “It’s been an honor to work here in the CNMI, working with the governor, the excellent team they have, [and] CHCC,” said Hoose. “While we’re coordinating the effort with our federal partners, FEMA efforts and the Commonwealth’s CHCC are doing an excellent job.”

“Always maintain your patience, and thank you for your understanding and cooperation,” said Torres. “Let’s continue to fight the coronavirus.”

A separate statement from the Office of the Governor said, “The Governor’s COVID-19 Task Force, CHCC, and FEMA continue their strong partnership to protect the people of the Marianas.”

To date, the CNMI has 14 positive cases, one active case, two deaths, and 11 recovered cases.

COVID-19 in Guam

After days of back-to-back news of zero people testing positive for COVID-19, Guam has added two more person to the list of individuals who have tested positive for the virus last April 22, bringing its overall total to

138 positive cases.

The Department of Public Health and Social Services in Guam tested 34 individuals for COVID-19 on April 22; all 34 tested negative. The additional positive cases were tested at the U.S Naval Hospital in Guam. That brings Guam’s overall total to 138.

Guam’s government has expanded the criteria with its new guideline: “If you have any [COVID-19] symptoms, you must get tested right away.”

Additionally, there’s a chance that the peak of COVID-19 in Guam can be seen in September or October.

According to a PowerPoint presentation that was released to the Guam community on April 22 during Guam’s Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero’s press briefing, Dr. Michael Cruz, executive officer of Guam Regional Medical City (a government of Guam-contracted facility) stated that Guam “has the potential to keep this pandemic from exceeding our hospital system’s threshold.”

Cruz is optimistic that Guam will be able to reopen some parts of the island “in a coordinated fashion.” This can be carried out with a “well-defined plan with clear checks and balances.”

To date, Guam has a total of 138 positive cases, with 119 recoveries, and five deaths.

SCHOOL

From Page 1

wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ada said that there are three plans that have been put on the table, one of which is re-opening schools later than usual.

With the uncertainty of how long the COVID-19 pandemic will last, Plan A involves delaying the opening of the school year. Plan B, which is dependent on PSS receiving a budget of at least \$19 million, would be four-day school weeks, half days, and five-hour pays for teachers, merging schools, and shifting as many courses online as possible.

“[We’re] still trying to figure this out with the federally funded instructors/employees. We might lose Title

1 teachers,” Ada said.

Plan C, which is dependent on PSS receiving a \$36-million to \$40-million budget, is opening schools on time and following last school year’s schedule.

“Re-imagine how schools will look like if there is still no vaccine but schools have to open,” Ada said.

Ultimately, Ada said, public education must continue in the CNMI and the PSS administration has been brainstorming ways to move forward in light of the impact COVID-19 has had on the CNMI.

“Bottom line, learning must continue. These are thoughts, ideas, brainstorming,” he said.

In a previous interview with Ada, PSS was informed by the Department of Finance that they should expect to receive a budget of \$19 million to about \$21 million next fiscal year.

AP-NORC

From Page 1

Americans to stay at home except for essential errands, including 91% of Democrats and 70% of Republicans. Similarly, 82% of Americans favor requiring Americans to limit the size of their gatherings to fewer than 10 people. About 9 in 10 Democrats and three-quarters of Republicans support that step.

■ While there is broad bipartisan backing for those specific measures to curtail the spread of the virus, Republicans are now less likely to say they strongly favor these policies than they were three weeks ago. For example, while 63% of Democrats strongly favor requiring Americans to stay home during the outbreak, just 36% of Republicans say the same. In late March, 51% of Republicans strongly favored the stay-home order. Two in 10 Republicans are now opposed to that policy.

■ Overall, 63% of Americans approve of how state governments are handling the outbreak and as many also approve of their local governments’ response. Three weeks ago, Americans were slightly less likely

to say they approved of each. Americans remain divided on the performance of the federal government, with 4 in 10 approving and about as many disapproving.

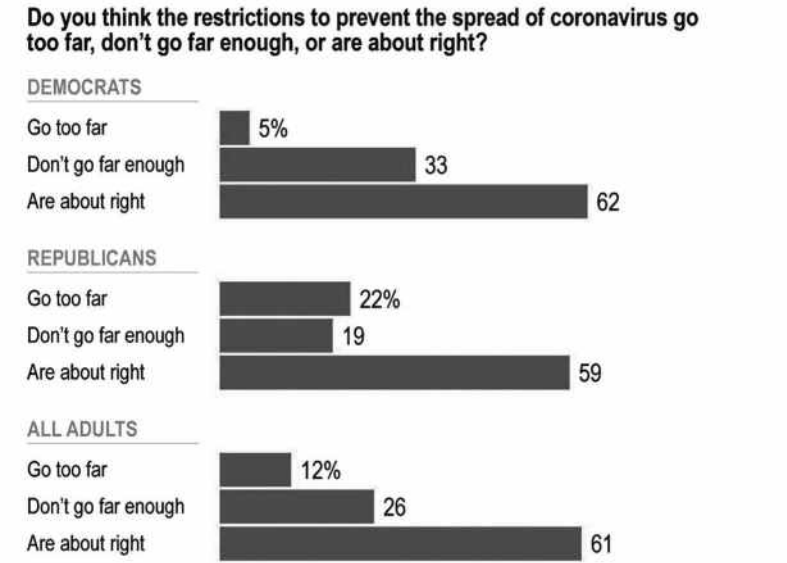
■ Democrats are the driving force behind increased support for the response of state and local governments, even as the praise is bipartisan. Seventy-three percent of Democrats now approve of their state governments’ response, up from 56% in late March. The share of Republicans expressing approval, 59%, is roughly comparable to the level a few weeks ago.

■ The emerging partisan split is also seen in how Americans of both parties view their state’s response based on which party controls the governor’s mansion.

In late March, while many Republican-led states had yet to enact stay-at-home orders to curb the spread of the outbreak, 72% of Republicans, but just 45% of Democrats, in states with a Republican governor said they approved of the state’s handling of the outbreak. In states with a Democratic governor, majorities of Americans in both parties praised the state response, with 66% of Democrats and 60% of Republicans saying they approved.

A majority of Americans think restrictions are appropriate to combat COVID-19

A new AP-NORC poll shows a majority of Americans say restrictions in their area to prevent the spread of coronavirus are about right, but Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say they go too far.



Results based on interviews with 1,057 U.S. adults conducted April 16-20. The margin of error is ±4.0 percentage points for the full sample.

SOURCE: AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research



COVID-19

From Page 1

Questions will include if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms. Even if you aren’t experiencing any symptoms, you will still be able to fill out the request for testing. An individual will have to provide their first and last name, birth date, gender, contact number(s), email, village, and how many people will be tested, including the individual filing.

In an earlier interview with Esther Muña, CHCC chief executive officer, said testing for the COVID-19 is intended to be free.

In the case of undocumented persons, Muña said her intention is to ensure that every individual will be comfortable enough to know that they won’t be reported to immigration authorities even if they are undocumented.

Test kits

Three days after CHCC received more medical supplies, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres took to Facebook again in a livestream video to announce that CHCC received additional medical supplies through another charter flight from the U.S. mainland yesterday.

The cargo included additional ventilators and personal protective

More funding for the Marianas amidst COVID-19 pandemic

By IVA MAURIN
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REPORTER

More funding is coming into the CNMI, on top of the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance guaranteed for furloughed government employees, loans available for small local businesses through the U.S. Small Business Administration, and stimulus checks underway for eligible, legal residents.

The CNMI is set to receive \$4 million in technical assistance from the Office of Insular Affairs, in response to a request made by Gov. Ralph DLG Torres to Assistant Secretary of Insular and International Affairs Douglas W. Domenech for additional assistance for ongoing first responder efforts.

The Office of Insular Affairs

Lions Club donates food to 20 families in CK

With many CNMI residents either jobless or furloughed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Lions Clubs International District 204, Region 2 recently gave a treat to families in Chalan Kanoa with a donation of KFC chicken wings.

About 20 families benefited from the donation, according to Region 2 chair Annamae Adaza. "It was nice seeing the families smiling and saying thank you and God bless. ... This was our way of giving back to the community," she said.

Adaza's daughter, Ramhae Awit, who is a member of the Leo Club, joined the Lions Clubs members in the giving out the KFC chicken wings. She said the time they spend with Lions members guide and teach them about doing community outreach and the value of being of help to the community.

"To see them continue to find ways to help during times like these really shows us how we have to broaden our minds on who we can help in the community," she said. "It was a great feeling to know that you've brightened up someone's mood just by giving."

"Once you take part in selflessly helping people, other people begin to notice your actions and reciprocate the gesture," she said.

Awit said she sees her mom as a selfless person. "I've tried my best to carry on some of her leadership and service traits to help others," she said.

Adaza thanked Lions Club zone chair Blanca Imbo of Guam for making the donations possible.

Also earlier this month, the Lions Club helped out 30 families by giving each \$35 vouchers to purchase food and other necessities. *(Chevy Alipio)*

is awarding the Commonwealth \$4,042,585 from the CARES Act to prepare, prevent, and respond to COVID-19.

"Our main priority since the beginning of this pandemic has been to stop the spread of this virus on our islands. ... This additional funding will allow us to further our efforts to contain this virus and keep our people safe," Torres said.

The CNMI will also be receiving \$22 million in airport aid from the Federal Aviation Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation to help in the Common-

wealth response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Part of the \$10-billion emergency funding allocated for airports in the United States, under the CARES Act Airport Grant Program, the fund, according to U.S. Transportation secretary Elaine L. Chao, is intended to help fund the continued operations of the nation's airports during the pandemic, and to save workers' jobs.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) said that the relief funding, \$22,759,818 for airports in the Northern Marianas, are to be used to-

DCCA's Child Care and Development Fund program to continue full reimbursements

The Child Care and Development Fund Program under the CNMI Department of Community and Cultural Affairs will be able to continue full reimbursements to all its CCDF-approved providers in spite of program closures.

Full reimbursements will be provided for the months of April, May, and June. Providers are to use the funds for the

expenses of their day care operations and/or to get them ready to open back again. Funds should also be used to pay for at least 50% of day care employees' monthly salaries.

For any questions related to the CCDF Program, email Maribel Lose, program administrator of CCDF, at mlose.cnmiccdf@gmail.com. *(PR)*

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ward the prevention, preparation, and response to the impacts of COVID-19.

Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport is awarded \$20,532,901; Tinian International Airport is to receive \$1,159,085; Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport will be awarded \$1,047,832; and Pagan Air-strip is to get \$20,000.

"The CARES Act funding will be available as soon as the Commonwealth Ports Authority executes a grant agreement with the FAA. Money may be used for any existing

lawful use of airport revenue, including operating expenses, and requires no local match," Sablan added.

Further, \$3,353,447 Child Care and Development Block Grant has also been awarded to help provide for child care in the CNMI during the pandemic.

According to Sablan, the Commonwealth is required to use the money for direct payments to child care providers to help them maintain operations to serve children of healthcare sector employees, emergency responders, sanitation workers, and other essen-

tial personnel.

The grant can also be used to support low-income families who rely on child care subsidies and to help temporarily closed providers get ready to reopen.

To help the library expand its services during the pandemic, Joeten-Kiyu Public Library was also awarded \$4,657 by the Institute of Museum and Library services. \$242,700 was also obligated to the Northern Marianas Humanities Council by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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'Pandemic has given environment a chance to breathe'

By IVA MAURIN

iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

If there's one thing positive about the COVID-19 pandemic, is its salutary effect to the environment. As the world celebrates this year's Earth Day, the pandemic is healing nature.

With countries implementing lockdowns, keeping vehicles from the roads, the world is seeing a drop in air pollution levels, wildlife roaming on empty streets, and murky canals getting clearer. With no tourists and a stay-at-home guidance in place, the CNMI

too, is seeing less pollution.

According to Rep. Joel Camacho (R-Saipan), the environment is an important issue that needs continued discussion and public education. "Although it has significantly impacted our economy, I believe this is one the rare times that our environment has had a chance to breathe," the House Natural Resources Committee vice chair said.

He added that this is an unprecedented time when the islands are seeing a significant decrease in trash in beaches and public places as a result of



KRIZEL TUAZON

Cuki and Mariana Alvarez celebrated Earth Day last Wednesday by picking up trash at the American Memorial Park after doing their daily exercise around the park.

the pandemic will help to keep our island clean and beautiful as our environment is the one precious asset we can pass down to our children and their children," Camacho said.

Sen. Vinnie Sablan (Ind-Saipan), an environmental advocate, said that we could only imagine what it would look like without the environmental controls such as the Clean Water and Air Act that was triggered by Earth Day.

"It was this day 50 years ago when people decided to pay tribute, to honor and to create movements to protect our Earth," Sablan added. "This day is a testament to the human ability to protect and preserve what was created for all of us. We owe everything to our environment."

Micronesia Islands Nature Alliance executive director Roberta Guerrero echoed Sablan. "Every day should be Earth Day. It's the only one we have. Honor it, respect its bounty and beauty, and keep it clean to save our islands' fragile environment for the generations that will come after us. Our home, our island, our responsibility."

social distancing policies.

"The coronavirus has taught us many things and has changed the norm around the world to-

day. One thing it definitely has done for the CNMI is that for the first time in a very long time, we have seen our beaches and

our tourist sites quiet."

"Beaches and public parks look pristine now and this valuable lesson resulting from

AGENDA

Pursuant to the Open Government Act, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Commonwealth Casino Commission ("Commission"), hereby give notice that the Commission has scheduled its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, April 29, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. However, pursuant to Governor Torres' Executive Orders 2020-004 and 2020-006, the Commission meeting will be conducted via video conference.

The following Agenda will be discussed:

I. PRELIMINARIES:

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Adoption of Agenda
- D. Adoption of Minutes: February 27, 2020

II. REPORTS:

- A. Report by the Chairman
- B. Report by the Executive Director

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

IV. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS:

- A. Casino Licensee -- Imperial Pacific International (CNMI), LLC ("IPI") -- Updates:
 - 1. Imperial Pacific Resort & Hotel ("IPR"):
 - a) Update on IPR's Construction Project
 - 2. IPI Personnel:
 - a) Resident Employment Objectives
 - b) Casino License Agreement -- Annual Plan
 - c) Update on the reduction in employee and management hours
 - d) Status of Employee Payroll
 - 3. Responsible Gaming Program
 - 4. Compliance Committee Report
 - 5. IPI Financial Matters
- B. Other Miscellaneous Matters.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

- A. Update on House Bill No. 21-11, HS1, SD3
- B. Other Old Business Matters

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. **Proposed Denial of Application** for a non-gaming Casino Vendor License -- Incomplete Application. **ATTA Illumination Technology Project Industry, Ltd.** Supplier of decorative panels, lightings, crystal fountains, and clear crystals. Provisional License expired on March 23, 2020.
- B. Election and designation of an Interim Chairman and Secretary for the Commonwealth Casino Commission.
- C. Other New Business Matters.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- A. Report by Legal Counsel
- B. Report by the CCC Audit and Compliance Division

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The Commission reserves the right to amend this agenda and take action on the amended agenda pursuant to 1 CMC §9910 (b). Pursuant to 1 CMC §9912 (a)(7) and 1 CMC §9912 (c), the Commission may vote to meet in Executive Session. In addition, the Commission may extend its official meeting for another day or more, if necessary. For those interested in joining or attending the video conference, please contact the Commission at info@cnmicasinocommission.com for instructions on how to log-in to the conference site.

/s/ Juan M. Sablan
Chairman

Man arrested for alleged disturbance

On Wednesday, April 22, 2020, at about 4:51pm, the CNMI Department of Public Safety received a 911 call reporting that an individual had pointed a gun in the village of Chinatown on Saipan. Police units were dispatched to the scene.

The first units to arrive on the scene met with witnesses,

who told police that a man had pointed a gun at them before walking away from the scene with two unknown adults. Police shared the description of the three suspects to



Rangamar

other units in the area. Shortly after, three men matching the description were apprehended outside a neighboring apartment.

Police spoke with the victims who stated that they were having a conversation when they noticed a passing tenant was intoxicated. One of the victims told the tenant that they looked drunk. The suspect then asked the victims to repeat what they had said. The victim repeated what was said, before the suspect

pointed a black gun at them. The victims immediately took cover and hid until police arrived.

Police identified Anthony C. Rangamar as the suspect and found a black pellet gun on him. At about 5:59pm, Rangamar was arrested and transported to the Department of Corrections where he was booked and detained.

The CNMI Department of Public Safety highly encourages the public to call 911 anytime to report a crime or an emergency. (PR)

Sablan: Vital our utilities are prioritized

By IVA MAURIN

iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With employees being laid off and retirees not receiving their full pension, their ability to pay for electricity and water are compromised. For this reason, the Senate wants the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to assure that there will be no interruption to its services.

Sen. Vinnie Sablan (Ind-Saipan), at the Senate session last Tuesday, called for the provision of utilities to be prioritized, especially as the community faces the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our people are being laid off. How will they then be able to pay their utility bill, and how will that affect the ability of CUC to provide services for our community?" the senator asked.

"It is vital that our utilities are prioritized. If there's any last ounce of sanity for our

people as they endure quarantine and all the orders that are coming their way, and if there's one thing that is providing comfort for them, it's power, water, and wastewater services," he added.

The legislator also spoke with Sen. Teresita Santos (Ind-Rota), chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation & Communications, to address the concern.

Sablan noted that it would be good to get information from CUC to learn the corporation's current state of providing and sustaining utilities to the local community, both on the residential and the commercial side.

"The absence of utility services will be detrimental. People will face an even more challenging time. It will be rather hard to keep our residents' home as they struggle to find what it is that they need

to provide for their families."

Further, Sablan said that utility services are crucial because it is the "one thing that we all need, the one thing that keeps us comforted as we go through this pandemic, as we go through this quarantine."

Without an end of this pandemic in sight, the senator said that it is important to find out where CUC's resources are and how long they can sustain the community. "We need to find out whether they [CUC] have the ability with the anticipation of nobody paying their utility bills. How long can we keep power and water on in our homes and in our communities?"

The senator, during the session, also expressed appreciation to the staff and leadership of CUC in continuing to provide services to residents and businesses, and lobbied that they be given all the resources necessary.

Camacho agrees to hear appeal in hit-and-run case

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Citing the CNMI Supreme Court's hearings protocol due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho has found unwarranted the Office of the Attorney General's request for the court to give the CNMI government 30 more days to file a notice of appeal about a restitution issue in a fatal vehicular hit-and-run case.

Camacho, however, said he understands that the OAG considers its motion to be time-sensitive in connection with the traffic case against Esekial "Easy" Smith. He agreed to hear the government's motion for more time this Wednesday, April 29, at 10am at the Supreme Court

courtroom.

Citing the NMI Supreme Court's COVID-19 order, Camacho said the motion for extension of time does not require testimony from witnesses, so the parties may appear via videoconference for the oral argument. If the parties wish to appear by video conference, the judge said, then it is the responsibility of the party/parties to make advance arrangements with the court's information technology staff.

Camacho said as the motion may require extensive arguments, videoconferencing will be allowed as the court will be able to see and hear the parties.

"The use of only audio/telephone will not be allowed," he said.

In the government's motion for extension, assistant attor-

ney general J. Robert Glass Jr. said more time is needed to allow Camacho to address the government's motion for reconsideration of his ruling.

Last March 30, Camacho ruled that the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. are not entitled to restitution over Melton Agulto's death because they are only third-party indirect victims.

Camacho denied the government's request to hold Smith liable to pay \$1,866 in restitution for the medical services provided by DFEMS and CHCC to Agulto.

The judge, however, found that Smith is liable for \$4,972 in restitution to Agulto's mother, Gloria Cabrera. Smith conceded he owed that amount.

The OAG then asked Camacho to reconsider his ruling. The OAG also filed a motion for extension.

Should the government file a notice of appeal, it is likely that jurisdiction will become an issue, Glass said.

Should Camacho grant the government's motion for reconsideration and award restitution to Agulto, it would render moot the need for an appeal, he added.

Currently, the notice of appeal would be due by April 29, 2020. A 30-day extension would give the parties until May 29, 2020, to file a notice of appeal.

In the motion for reconsideration, Glass asserted that the court should amend its judgment to include the \$1,866 bills from CHCC and DFEMS

to be paid to Agulto.

Glass said there is no question that Agulto is the direct victim in this case. To deny the direct crime victim's estate recovery for these bills would be clear error and a manifest injustice, he added.

Assistant public defender Jean Pierre Nogues, counsel for Smith, argued that DFEMS and CHCC were not victims in this case and are not entitled to restitution, and that the tort defense of comparative negligence should apply in this matter.

In Smith's opposition to the motion for reconsideration, Nogues said Agulto is not entitled to restitution for his hospital bills because he is dead and cannot pay any bills himself.

According to court records, Smith, who was driving a vehicle north in Puerto Rico after midnight on Aug. 19, 2018, hit Agulto as the latter was walking in the middle of the street. Smith fled the scene after the accident. Agulto died as a result of his injuries.

Later that day, Smith surrendered to the police.

On Jan. 30, 2019, Smith pleaded guilty to the charges of leaving an accident scene and reckless driving. He was sentenced to five years and six months in prison, with the last six months suspended. Smith was ordered to pay restitution to Agulto's family.

The parties agreed that, at a minimum, Smith owed \$1,000 in restitution. The defendant immediately paid the amount from the bail money that he had posted. The parties disagreed as to how much is owed in restitution and to whom.



DONATION TO COTA

Hanaivy Babauta, second from left, president of the NMC Business Club, presents on Monday, April 20, 2020, face masks that the club donated for the use of the drivers and staff of the Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority. The club made a similar donation to the security and maintenance staff of Northern Marianas College that same day.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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ATTORNEY FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANAS)
HOUSING CORPORATION,) **CIVIL ACTION**
Plaintiff,) **NO. 18-0103**
-v-)
AGRIPINA I. GIODA)
and MICHAEL J. GIODA,)
DEFENDANTS)

SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANTS:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is served upon you hereby, within twenty-one (21) days after the fourth publication of this Summons, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC, the Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is Post Office Box 5222, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

Dated April 22, 2020 by order of the Court:

/s/ Clerk of Court



DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

P. O. Box 501304, Saipan MP 96950, Gualo Rai Center, Saipan

TEL. NO. 664-8300 • FAX NO. 664-8315

www.dcrm.gov.mp



NOTICE OF APPLICATION

As of April 24, 2020

THE FOLLOWING IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF COASTAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE DCRM OFFICE:

APPLICANT	DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED	APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TYPE	STATUS
1. Rotary Club of Saipan	03/05/2020 SSm-2020-X-042	Construction of Signage	Oleai, Saipan	Shoreline	Approved* 04/20/2020
2. Vertical Aviation, LLC	03/11/2020 SPI-2020-X-043	Helipad, Hangar, & Office Facility	Puerto Rico, Saipan	Ports & Industrial	Under Review*
3. Marianas Geotech Services	04/09/2020 SPI-2020-X-044	Geotechnical Soil Investigation	Lower Base, Saipan	Ports & Industrial	Approved* 04/21/2020
4. Calvary International Mission Db a Agape Christian School	01/23/2020 SMS-2020-X-030	Three Storey Building with Basement	Gualo Rai, Saipan	Major Siting	Public Hearing Postponed 04/10/2020

NMIAC §15-10-210 of the CRM Rules and Regulations requires all permit applications to be published in a newspaper for general circulation within the CNMI within 15 days of receipt of application. The list reflects recently received permit applications and those with a recent change in status. New applications are marked with an asterisk (*).

The Public is invited to submit written comments regarding any of the above projects for which a permit decision has not been issued. All permit comments should identify the project by application number. Your comments should be mailed or hand-delivered to the DCRM Office. All persons who desire a public hearing regarding any project may do so by submitting a written request for a public hearing to the DCRM Office within fourteen (14) days for minor permits (APCs) and proposed amended major sitings. Public Hearings are required for all new major siting projects. All public hearing notices are published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Residents of Rota and Tinian may submit comments and hearing requests to their local DCRM Coordinator. Persons wishing to retain the right to appeal a DCRM Permit decision must file a notice of appeal with the DCRM office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the DCRM permit decision as provided in Part 200 § 15-10-235 of the DCRM Regulations.

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Financial aid available for NMC's summer 2020 session

Individuals who are interested in enrolling in Northern Marianas College's summer 2020 session can access federal financial aid to help pay for tuition and other education related expenses through the

Federal Financial Aid Program, which uses the Free Application for Federal Student Aid or FAFSA form.

The Federal Financial Aid program is administered by the U.S. Department of Education.

Through the program's various types of grants, loans, and scholarships, the Federal Financial Aid program is the largest financial aid provider in the U.S.

New students will need to submit a 2019-2020 FAFSA

by June 5, 2020. NMC's school code is 015746. To verify eligibility for Pell grants, applicants can contact the NMC Financial Aid Office through email at fao@marianas.edu.

Those who have already submitted a 2019-2020 FAFSA do not need to reapply or re-submit a FAFSA for the summer session.

NMC's summer session offers virtual and online busi-

ness, education, math, nursing, and science courses. For more information on the Summer 2020 session, contact the Office of Admissions and Records at oar@marianas.edu or visit www.marianas.edu. (PR)

NEX Guam helps *Roosevelt* sailors with remote services

SANTA RITA, Guam—Navy Exchange Guam has processed and delivered more than 1,500 remote orders to sailors of the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* utilizing the downrange program.

The program is a service developed to provide NEX shopping for sailors who are unable to physically visit the store. The program originated at NEX Djibouti to take care of "downrange" troops in other parts of Africa.

"With the impact of COVID-19 restricting sailors to quarters, the team here at NEX Guam modified the program to support sailors in hotels and on ships," NEX Guam store manager Chris Traxler said. "The sailors are provided a catalog with some basic items but they can really request anything in the store."

The *Roosevelt* arrived at Apra Harbor on March 27. The Nimitz-class nuclear powered aircraft carrier brought nearly 5,000 sailors, thousands of whom are being housed on NBG and at Guam hotels amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Downrange Program is an integral part of the U.S. Naval Base Guam Quality of Life Task Force. The primary focus of the task force is to enhance the morale for the sailors who are currently under isolation

and quarantine.

"I am impressed and grateful for the phenomenal work NEX Guam is doing as part of the NBG Quality of Life Task Force," NBG commanding officer Capt. Jeffrey Grimes said. "The small comforts and pieces of home that the NEX Downrange Program brings to the fight are excellent reminders to the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* sailors that people care."



According to Traxler, some of the most popular items being ordered are snacks, drinks, toiletries and clothing as well as electronics, including laptops.

Sailors place their orders through email. Once the order is received by the NEX team, a sales associate takes the order and shops for the mer-

chandise. The order is brought to the processing area where the payment is applied and then it is boxed. The items are then delivered to wherever the sailor may be housed.

"Many of our team actually call the customer to see what they want and any substitutions," Traxler said. "We have logged about 1,500 orders



Navy Exchange Guam has processed and delivered more than 1,500 orders to sailors from the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* and other ships at U.S. Naval Base Guam under its Downrange Program. The program allows for sailors who are unable to go to the NEX brick-and-mortar stores to make purchases online.

NEX GUAM

so far but have received over 7,000 emails. We estimate there are about 600 more orders to log and process."

For Traxler and the NEX Guam team, this is just what they do each and every day for their military customers.

"The NEX has always been an integral part of the community and the Navy but during crisis such as COVID19,

our support for the mission is clearly evident as we are the major source of food and laundry for the TR sailors on the base, supporting sailors with the Downrange Program, and finally taking care of our sailors, families and retirees here in Guam," Traxler said. "Our team is always doing our best to go above and beyond for everyone we support." (PR)



Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

April 24, 2000

US auditors to probe Saipan seaport scandal

Federal auditors are expected to begin a thorough investigation into the financial controversy surrounding the dredging and construction of the \$43 million Saipan harbor which was completed April last year after almost six years since the project started. Ports Authority Board Chair Roman S. Palacios made the audit request to the Office of the Inspector General of the interior department following a recommendation by the Governor's Transition Committee because of the increase in the project's scope and cost. Mr. Palacios explained that the long delay

in the project's completion warrants a federal audit of the multi-million Saipan harbor improvement.

CUC wants govt to pay up

Unable to collect payment from the government during the past few months, the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation has demanded at least \$1.5 million each month to partly settle its huge debt representing unpaid utility bills since last year. The government-owned utility firm has been in talks with the Department of Finance for the last two weeks to try to negotiate a payment schedule to reduce arrears amounting to over \$11 million, according

to CUC Board Chair Jesus T. Guerrero. "We are working with the finance department to make that payment. We are asking them to make a schedule of payment," he told in an interview.

April 24, 2001

Higher port traffic spur growth

Local leaders yesterday acknowledged the significant contributions of the shipping industry to the overall efforts to alleviate the Commonwealth's economic conditions which suffered a blow from the 1997 Asian crisis. For the past four years, the Port of Saipan played host to about 59 United States military vessels that berthed on the multi-million harbor for days of rest and recreation stopover. In 1997 and 1998, only four military ships — the USS *Thatch* and USS *Juneau* which anchored at

Charlie Dock and USS *Blue Ridge* and USS *San Jose* that moored at the North Baker Dock respectively—called the Port of Saipan.

Garment firm seeks to collect over \$56K

A Saipan garment manufacturing company has filed a civil court complaint against a security services agency for breach of contract and unjust enrichment in connection with the latter's alleged failure to pay proper wages to its employees. Locally-based firm KGC International doing business as Villagomez Security Services allegedly failed to pay 14 of its employed security guards the proper overtime payments required under the CNMI and US minimum wage and overtime laws, according to plaintiff Hansae (Saipan) Inc. The guards during the years 1998-2000 were detailed by its employer to the Hansae

garment factory on Saipan.

April 24, 2002

...as MVA escapes the axe

Gov. Juan N. Babauta yesterday exempted the Marianas Visitors Authority from the 8-percent reduction in the quarterly allotment of all government agencies. The exemption was apparently made in efforts to allow the MVA to launch an intensive marketing and promotional activities, which are hoped to realize the Babauta Administration's goal for one million tourists. Babauta earlier instructed an 8-percent across-the-board reduction in the quarterly allotments of government agencies, in line with his administration's renewed call for austerity. Citing the MVA's role in the revival of the Commonwealth economy, however, the Governor agreed to exempt the MVA from the

budget cuts. He also earlier exempted the Public School System from the 8 percent quarterly allotment reduction.

Wedding guests sue Grand Hotel

Guests to a wedding reception catered by the Saipan Grand Hotel last June 2000 are suing the Susupe-based establishment on ground that the latter's alleged negligence brought death to one guest and caused others to suffer severely from food poisoning. Ten Saipan residents, through counsel Eric Smith, filed the civil complaint yesterday at the Superior Court, seeking to collect damages from Micro Pacific Development Inc., doing business as Saipan Grand Hotel. The plaintiffs alleged that the Grand Hotel negligently served them contaminated food during the Nena-Taisacan wedding reception held at the hotel's Seaside Garden Restaurant last June 17, 2000.

McDonald's Says Thanks



From left: McDonald's Saipan owner and operator Marcia "Ruri" Ayuyu, executive assistant to the president Mable Ayuyu Glenn, and Lt. Gov. Arnold Palacios at the "Thank You Meal" launch Wednesday at McDonald's Middle Road.

BEA CABRERA



McDonald's Saipan owner and operator Marcia "Ruri" Ayuyu shows "Thank You Meal" packages that await CNMI first responders.

BEA CABRERA



McDonald's Saipan and Guam president Jose "Joe" C. Ayuyu elbow bumps with Guam Gov. Lourdes Leon Guerrero during a visit to inform the governor about the "Thank You Meal" campaign for Guam's COVID-19 first responders.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Commonwealth Health Center nurses mimic the McDonald's logo at the "Thank You Meal" lunch Wednesday at the McDonald's Middle Road branch.

BEA CABRERA



Department of Public Safety Commissioner Robert A. Guerrero and Marcia "Ruri" Ayuyu pose with the men and women of DPS at the "Thank You Meal" lunch last Wednesday at the McDonald's Middle Road branch.

BEA CABRERA



Marcia "Ruri" Ayuyu poses with the men and women of the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services last Wednesday at the McDonald's Middle Road branch.

BEA CABRERA



McDonald's Saipan owner/operator Marcia "Ruri" Ayuyu poses with the McDonald's Middle Road team who tended to the first responders last Wednesday at the McDonald's Middle Road branch.

BEA CABRERA



From left, first lady Dianne Torres, Gov. Ralph Torres and McDonald's Saipan owner and operator Marcia "Ruri" Ayuyu last Wednesday at the McDonald's Middle Road branch.

BEA CABRERA



Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services spokesperson Derek Gersonde shows the "Thank You Meal" packages he picked up for his team

BEA CABRERA



McDonald's Saipan and Guam president Jose "Joe" C. Ayuyu poses with son Joe Ayuyu Jr., Guam Gov. Lourdes Leon Guerrero, and her staff during the launch of the "Thank You Meal" program in Guam.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



From left, Lt. Gov. Arnold Palacios, Gov. Ralph Torres, McDonald's owner/operator Marcia "Ruri" Ayuyu, and first lady Dianne Torres touch elbows at the Thank You Meal launch last Wednesday at the McDonald's Middle Road branch. The elbow touch is intended to comply with medical advice to minimize touching hands to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

BEA CABRERA



Men of the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services enjoy their "Thank You Meal" packages Wednesday at the McDonald's Middle Road branch.

BEA CABRERA

Opinion

Hafa Adai! Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

The oil market went negative, but gasoline will still cost you money

Oil futures prices went negative earlier this week, but nobody's going to pay you to fill your gas tank.

What happened among oil speculators this week is no reason for the rest of us to panic, but it does reflect a very serious supply glut that will have long-term implications for the economy.

On Monday, the May crude oil futures contract plunged to the lowest point in oil futures history, minus-\$37.63 a barrel, the day before it expired. The contract represents an agreement to deliver oil at a certain price on a certain date. A growing supply glut due to coronavirus lockdowns meant that traders preferred to liquidate the contracts as best they could. Essentially, producers had to pay buyers to take delivery of crude and store it.

On Tuesday, the June contract for West Texas Intermediate crude was trading at \$20.43 a barrel. This is an odd oil market situation called contango, which is a lot less fun than it sounds. That is, the price of oil for future delivery is higher than the spot price. So, in theory, the oil filling storage tanks will become more valuable later; but in practice we just don't know when or to what extent that will happen.

Pipelines are filling up, storage is filling up, as consumers use significantly less petroleum products for driving, fueling manufacturing plants, making toys and pens and other consumer goods, and even wrapping consumer goods in plastic. We can hope that once global economies open up again, people will go back to their normal buying habits, but it's hard to predict when. And with staggering unemployment, it's hard to predict how strongly the economy will come back.

What this means for Americans is that gasoline is cheap, and the price of our plastic consumer prices might go down. But the economy of states like Texas is at risk as the oil industry tumbles. Many oil workers are likely to lose their jobs, and state tax revenue from oil production and fuel sales will take a dive. And don't expect some silver lining opportunity for renewable energy; those companies are also grappling with low demand and prices for energy.

Right now, many producers say they are cutting current production or drilling plans. The Texas Railroad Commission is considering whether to intervene and prorate production, that is, require blanket reductions to reduce the supply glut. The commission that regulates the oil industry put off the decision to explore the legal ramifications of stepping into the market for the first time since the 1970s, and producers are split on whether they would welcome such a move.

All of this should underscore the severity of what's happening and amplify the need to reopen the economy to boost demand for energy, but to do so in a way that is orderly and safe. Opening up too quickly would only compound the kind of calamity we can already see unfolding.

(c) 2020 The Dallas Morning News



Isle tidings

For all that may have been derailed by bad tidings of the fatal coronavirus (COVID-19), we retreat to our quiet corner pondering what the beast is all about. It's a virus that fills the lungs with fluid until the person's history!

The viral infection is a critical health and life issue that has killed over 40,000 people across the country. The state of Georgia sees 35 deaths daily. It's more the reason to keep abreast.

This was dovetailed by the huge drop in the price of oil per barrel that took the oil industry by surprise. At any rate, there's unity focusing on the return of health and the economy.

Recently, Missouri sued China for mishandling the viral infection now a pandemic. The viral infection is fatal.

Resiliency

Indeed, we've seen the bad times and came out of it ever strong and ready to deal with issues forthwith. It may be difficult but it isn't an apocalyptic phenomenon either. Thus, we work diligently once more to secure real answers or solutions.

Though we're in it with cuts and bruises, I take pride in our effort to move on in unity resetting and resolving obligations heading into the future. The decrease in the economy makes the task a bit blurry, if not disorienting. Don't give up; it's the nature of the beast. It means far less for far more. Are we ready for sober discussions and rational decisions in the disposition of asymmetrical issues, including the lack of money that means obligatory cuts to meet the needs of "we the people"?

Leadership

In dizzying disorientation we pace the bad economic times, retreating occasionally, exhausted. It's more the reason to endure seeking for real answers from one and all.

Have we taken the effort to secure real set of facts to dissect how do we mitigate it? Or do we treat it with the usual adolescent demeanor? Stick with it!

Shut!

President Trump has shut down immigration into the country, reiterating his announced position on "America First." It stays this way until the 22 million jobless countrymen have found jobs. The only group spared under the new policy is the farming industry and a few others.

Gone!

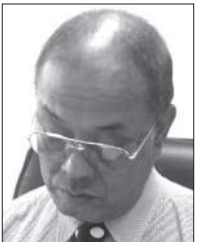
The economic decrease has shuttered small businesses while rendering employees jobless. It's a tough situation where it simply wipes out revenues and jobs.

The drop in profits forces a shutter. The business is gone (revenue and jobs) while employees ponder their fate.

The loss of opportunity turns more visible in bad times. The jobless ponder the provision of basic family needs. It's basically gone! Collecting unemployment checks isn't the answer. Our people take pride working a meaningful job to bring home the bacon, so to speak.

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the Saipan Tribune.



Earning our dues is imbedded in our being taught by our elders to do it responsibly. It has served as the foundation of filial security in the villages.

The deadly virus is comprised of pathogens that kill and, sadly, there is no medication for it at this point, per medical reports. Even the medical community is mulling its pathology.

Adios

I was profoundly saddened to learn of the untimely passing of my friend, Abed Younis, publisher of the *Marianas Variety*. In 1972, Younis had a vision of opening a local newspaper. It didn't take long before he founded what today is the daily MV.

He's a man of dignity, integrity, and sense of humor. I treasure our friendship through the years. He's spent many Thursday nights alone pasting the paper.

My late brother, Frank, and I would assist him with stories for publication. Thanks for the outstanding working relationship and lasting friendship. May your journey home be a blessed one! Si JR.

Katma

Sessu hu ekuñgug haf' na mampus silensiu i tanu'. Kulan mo-hon Bietnes Santu gi tiempun kuaresma 'nai todú mansilensiu. Kuestion: haf' umafuetsas tautau-ta man-mamatkilu?

Kau chinatsagan halum guma' familia? Haf' sessu ennau na attikulu? Na ti magahet na 15-mit na empleau guine gumagana suetdun popble? Haf' na planu guaha para uma-adelanta este na asuntu?

Ilegu na mangaige ha' i tropan hegsu' I Deni'! Fan hatpapa' ya ta-fan hita manohge gi yanu na plaset sa' man-ali'e hit mata sin ditension.

\$\$\$\$

Interesting how the unemployed across the country now make more money than being employed. No wonder most have opted not to seek jobs and not when they collect more without one! Misgiving!

Deadlier

Reportedly, the second wave of the coronavirus could be deadlier than it is today, per a recent medical report. It's something to anticipate as we head into the holiday season dealing with a strange and fatal virus.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

My proposed solution to our fiscal challenge

After seeing our people struggle in their daily lives, I can see why our government is facing this fiscal challenge, especially when we don't have the safety net to soften the impact when we hit rock bottom. COVID-19 may be partly to blame for the shortage of 25% funding for the retirees, for the unpaid teachers at public schools, the layoffs among private sector employees, and the furloughed civil service workers. The struggle is real. There is nothing put away for the rainy days.

It seems that from the get go, we were made to believe that the government is the answer to all our problems when in fact it is not. In most cases, the government is the problem. But that is another subject for discussion. I am writing to offer my two cents' worth of suggestion regarding the governor's call to address the CNMI's fiscal crisis. Based on the briefing paper that was provided, the unaudited financial information shows that the CNMI is operating on a \$65-million deficit in fiscal year 2020. And we now have approximately \$77.2 million to carry us until Sept. 30, 2020. We are truly in a deep hole.

So it is fair to say that for fiscal year 2021, our economy is uncertain. And this might be worse if we have a protracted economic growth. Again, the question of where the CBF is and how we got to this financial mess are topics for another discussion.

For now, I'd like to offer a possible suggestion and/or solution to get us out of this fiscal financial crisis. First is to allow our people "not" to be dependent on the government. Allow them to prosper for themselves. How? We need to objectively look at what is holding down our people and to improve their standard of living comparable to those in the United States. I am talking about removing and repealing Article 12 so that it will allow our people to market their real estate properties to the highest bidder. We need to create a marketable title real estate industry for those who wish to exercise their right as "owners" as to what they want to do with their real estate property, whether to lease it, rent it, barter it or sell it outright. It should be their decision and not the government.

It is a touchy and controversial subject and most politicians do not want to take a stand on the issue. Our founding documents, the Covenant and our Constitution, placed a 25-year hold so that we will not be exploited by outsiders. And so that is why the Article 12 was placed in our Constitution. But it's now over 41 years since then and now it is time that we lift the restriction placed on Article 12 to allow our people to decide for themselves what to do with their real estate properties—to lease it, rent it, barter it, or sell it. Or not to do anything with it and keep it forever.

So the solution to our fiscal crisis is for our current govern-

By GLENN H. MANGLONA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Glenn H. Manglona is the host of the radio talk show Marianas Agupa.



ment to provide our people with the quickest and most efficient guidance to repeal Article 12 as soon as possible. A

possible solution is to repeal it by senatorial district—on Rota and Tinian, then in Saipan.

If we do not explore this possible solution to address the fiscal crisis that our government is facing, we will forever be dependent on our government. The underlying benefit for our people is to allow them to prosper and not be dependent on the government thereby reducing the fiscal crisis.

I sense that if our economic recovery is protracted, our local people will suffer irreparable harm. We need to untie the chokehold on Article 12. The time is now. And quickly.

Getting medical care in your home during the pandemic

At Medicare, we understand you may have concerns about going to your doctor's office during the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Like so many Americans, our Medicare beneficiaries are rightly observing social distancing guidelines to protect themselves and others from possible infection. We also recognize that our beneficiaries still need checkups, prescription refills, or other care from their doctors.

The good news is that President Trump dramatically expanded access to telehealth services for Medicare beneficiaries during the pandemic. Telehealth lets you communicate with your physician and other healthcare professionals using your phone, video chat, secure text messaging, email, or through a patient portal.

That means you don't have to leave your home and risk exposure to the virus.

Medicare is paying for our 62 million beneficiaries to have at-home access to a broad range of telehealth services.

If you're in a Medicare Advantage health plan, check with your plan. We recently authorized Medicare Advantage plans to offer expanded telehealth coverage to meet the needs of their enrollees.

Telehealth can be used for routine office visits, preventive health screenings, mental health counseling, and care that ordinarily would require a trip to an outpatient clinic or hospital emergency room.

In fact, Medicare recently added 80 more telehealth services, including radiation treatment management, therapeutic exercises, prosthetic training, assistive technology assessments, group psychotherapy, inpatient neonatal and pediatric critical care, and end-stage renal disease care.

So I encourage Medicare beneficiaries to take advantage of these great new services. Contact your doctor or health plan about available telehealth options.

For people with Original Medicare, telehealth is covered under Part B. President Trump is allowing healthcare providers to reduce or waive the usual Part B coinsurance and deductible for these services, if they choose.

Doctors, nurse practitioners, clinical psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, and other clinicians are all eligible to provide telehealth services.

Medicare also pays for phone calls with your doctor. You can even get telehealth from a doctor with whom you don't have an established relationship.

So please, if you're a senior, follow the federal recommendations – "30 days to slow the spread." As President Trump has recommended, stay at home and away from other people for the next few weeks. This is especially important for older people with a serious health condition – such as heart or lung problems or a weakened immune system – that puts them at higher risk for the virus.

By SEEMA VERMA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Seema Verma is administrator of the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.



Medicare is offering these new telehealth options during the pandemic so you can get the care you need, and the peace of mind that comes with it, from the comfort of your own home.

For more information on Medicare coverage of telehealth, please go to: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/president-trump-expands-telehealth-benefits-medicare-beneficiaries-during-covid-19-outbreak>

CMS actions in response to COVID-19 are part of the ongoing White House Coronavirus Task Force efforts. To keep up with the important work the Task Force is doing in response to COVID-19, visit www.coronavirus.gov. For a complete and updated list of CMS actions, and other information specific to CMS, visit the Current Emergencies Website.

Pandemic shows why borders exist

When President Donald Trump announced a restriction on travel from Europe in a mid-March Oval Office address, European Union officials erupted in outrage.

The president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, issued a joint statement with the president of the European Council, thundering, "The coronavirus is a global crisis, not limited to any continent, and it requires cooperation rather than unilateral action."

Just a few days later, von der Leyen advanced her own proposal to ban nonessential travel into the EU.

We are all restrictionists now. In the coronavirus crisis, everyone realizes the importance of borders, even the people who not long ago were ideologically hostile toward them.

Borders mark off the sovereign territory of one people from another. They are a means—if they can be enforced and defended—for a sovereign state to protect its people from invaders, and unwelcome immigrants and goods. They are a tool almost every nation has used to try to keep the coronavirus from gaining a foothold in its population, and to try to keep it from spreading further.

The lyrics of the treacly John Lennon classic "Imagine"—recently performed by celebrities organized by actress Gal Gadot

as a balm in this time of distress—have never been so absurdly inapt. If there were really no countries and the world were as one, we'd be even more vulnerable to whatever threat arises in a city in central China, or anywhere else on the globe.

Of course, travel restrictions haven't prevented the spread of the disease—there's no such thing as an airtight seal. But restrictions at least bought governments some additional time, and openness to foreign travel from China has been an accelerant on its spread.

Such restrictions are the least of it. Italy has had trouble importing masks because European counties have been working to hold on to medical supplies, indeed to hold on to food. According to the Wall Street Journal, "German officials said their restrictions were partly designed to safeguard supplies at German supermarkets from French shoppers."

So much for a new era of European solidarity dissolving historic, centuries-old political and cultural divisions.

In a crisis, everyone realizes their foremost obligation is to their own.

Of course, Trump is naturally inclined to this view. He imposed travel restrictions even before he was truly seized with the seriousness of this crisis. The pandemic gives new credibility to his dim view of our commercial entanglement with China and, before this is all over, there will probably be bipartisan legis-

By RICH LOWRY
King Features Synd., Inc.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.



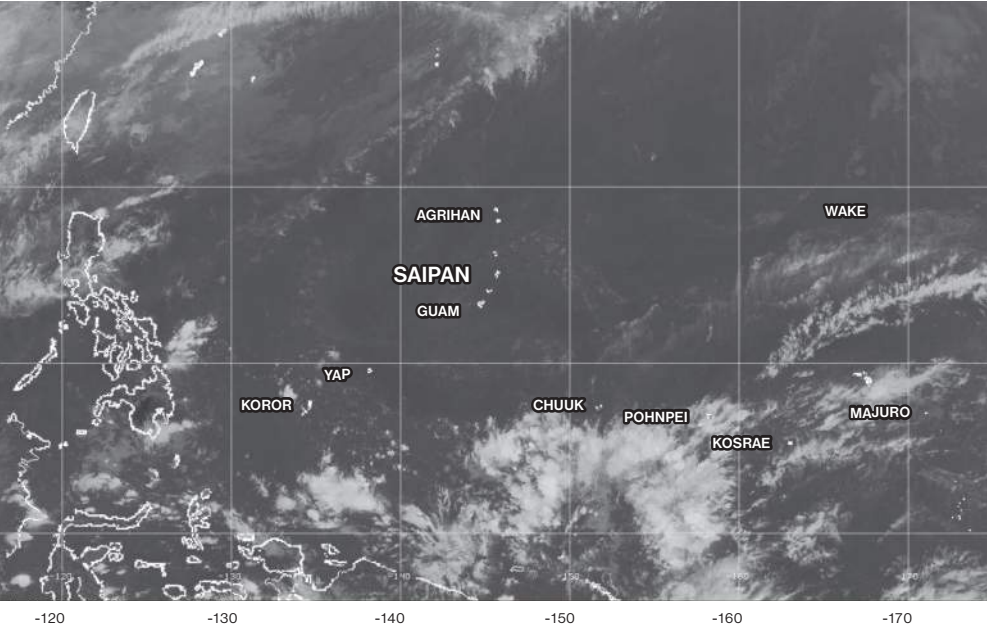
lation to minimize our dependence on Chinese-manufactured pharmaceuticals and medical equipment.

None of this means that we shouldn't wish other counties well, help them if we can, and share research and technologies. But borders exist for a reason. All peoples have their own governments that, if they are doing their jobs, put the health, safety and welfare of their own people first.

The coronavirus has acted as a solvent on a decade or more of clichés about the arrival of a globalized world where old lines drawn on a map no longer matter. In a crisis, everyone turns to borders as a first line of defense.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY		TUESDAY	
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
89°	77°	89°	77°	88°	77°	88°	77°	88°	77°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 6:09 AM, THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

East-northeast trades, patchy clouds and a few showers prevail this morning. Combined seas are still 4 to 6 feet at the buoys.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GOVERNMENT RESOURCE LISTING AS OF
APRIL 16, 2020



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

- Cashier & Customer Service**
Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Tel: (670) 664-4282
Pay bills online at www.cucgov.org or via phone by calling toll free 1-(855)-729-2282



Department of Public Works

- Solid Waste Management Division**
 - Lower Base Transfer Station & Marpi Landfill**
Open all week except Wednesday
7:30 AM - 1:00 PM
Tel: (670) 322-2745



Department of Finance

- Division of Revenue & Taxation**
CASHIER ONLY
Monday - Friday
7:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Tel: (670) 664-1000
- Division of Customs Services**
 - Airport:** OPEN DAILY
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
 - Seaport:** Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
 - Chalan Kanoa Post Office:**
Monday - Friday 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Saturday 7:30 AM - 11:30 AM



Department of Public Lands

- CASHIER ONLY
Monday - Thursday
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
Tel: (670) 234-3751/52/53/54



Saipan Zoning Office

- Available via phone only
Monday - Thursday
7:30 AM - 11:30 AM
Tel: (670) 234-9661/2/3
Email: yubert.alepuyo@zoning.gov.mp
Call or email for more information



Department of Public Works

- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation**
 - Available via phone or email only on Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays from 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Tel: (670) 322-6537/38
Email: maryann@ovrgov.net
- Office of the Attorney General**
 - Civil & Criminal Divisions**
Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Tel: (670) 237-7500/7600
- Office of the Public Defender**
 - Monday - Friday
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Tel: (670) 234-6503

MICRONESIA			▲	▼	°F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	88° / 79°			
Palau	Thunderstorms	87° / 80°			
Yap	Thunderstorms	88° / 80°			
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	87° / 81°			
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°			
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°			
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°			

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:57 AM	6:33 PM
Saturday	5:56 AM	6:33 PM
Sunday	5:56 AM	6:33 PM
Monday	5:55 AM	6:33 PM
Tuesday	5:55 AM	6:33 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	6:39 AM	7:30 PM	-
Saturday	7:19 AM	8:21 PM	-
Sunday	8:01 AM	9:13 PM	-
Monday	8:48 AM	10:07 PM	-
Tuesday	9:38 AM	11:01 PM	-

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NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GOVERNMENT RESOURCE LISTING AS OF
APRIL 16, 2020



Department of Community and Cultural Affairs

- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**
Accepting Calls From Existing Customers Only
Tel: (670) 287-1475
- Division of Youth Services (DYS) On-Call**
Saipan: (670) 285-2780 / 287-2781 / 287-1773
Tinian: (670) 287-3268
Rota: (670) 287-2553
- Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)**
For inquiries regarding parent eligibility requirements for CCDF Program:
Tel: (670) 783-8571 / (670) 783-8572
Email: dccajguerrero@gmail.com / ccdf.jrosario@gmail.com
- Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture (CCAC)**
For Recovery Arts Grant Application Submissions. Grant Guidelines are available at <http://www.cnmiartscouncil.org>
Tel.: (670) 287-4585
Email: parkeryobei@gmail.com
- Historic Preservation Office (HPO)**
For Processing of Federal 106 Consultations Call
Tel: (670) 789-1986
Email: rchong.cnmihipo@gmail.com



Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP)
Benefit Pick Up: Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Application Pick Up: Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Application Submission:
Anytime via Drop-Box

Application Inquiries:
Tel: (670) 237-2801/2802

To download the NAP application and other forms go to dcca.gov.mp
Email: support@cnminap.gov.mp

Business

Atkins Kroll keeping customers safe during pandemic

By IVA MAURIN

iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

As the world goes on lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the hardest hit is the automotive industry.

The same is true in the CNMI. The auto-dealership business has been negatively impacted financially, sales and rentals have dropped, and on top of that, they had to expeditiously come up and embrace processes and protocols that would ensure the health and safety of their customers and staff.

Atkins Kroll vice president and general manager Clark Boswell said that the pandemic has affected them in countless ways, mainly a big decline in sales. Their Service, Body Shop, and Parts departments have been more stable.

"Auto sales in March for the CNMI saw a decrease of 68% versus March of last year. That is a huge drop off. For the first three months of this year compared to 2019, the auto market is down around 40%."

Atkins Kroll's rental car department also has a big decline in sales, being dependent on tourist arrivals.

Despite the pandemic, it is business as usual for the company. Atkins Kroll has enacted measures in accordance with the COVID-19 Task Force guidelines, and implemented their own as well, to keep customers and staff safe.

"We're doing temperature screening at our road entrance, maintaining social



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Atkins Kroll auto-dealership along Beach Road in Oleai is open from 8am to 5pm, Monday through Saturday.

distancing throughout our customer areas and workplace, encouraging the use of masks, and we have doors designated for entrance and exit only," Boswell said.

Areas of high traffic are sanitized throughout the day, and Plexiglas barriers were put up in areas where staff and customers interact face-to-face.

"For test drives, and also for our Service customers bringing their cars in, we are using disposable steering wheel covers and sanitizing certain areas that are commonly touched. We're doing our best to keep Atkins Kroll a safe environment where employees and customers alike feel comfortable."

Boswell is confident that vehicles will continue to be in demand in the CNMI, but that it will take a full recovery

of the tourism market before the islands see the car market reach 2018 or 2019 sales levels again.

"The auto business will be sustainable, but there are technologies and advancements that are creating some disruption and changes. All of the major manufacturers like Toyota are adapting to these changes—as are businesses like Atkins Kroll."

The pandemic is changing all industries, with extra emphasis on health and safety of both employees and customers.

"I think we've learned recently that to successfully operate as a business in these times, your staff and your customers must feel safe enough to come to work."

Atkins Kroll is open from 8am to 5pm, Monday through Saturday.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Atkins Kroll sales associate Liza Taylor attends to a customer behind the protective screen that the auto-dealership installed.

Special lunch bentos at Spicy Thai

By BEA CABRERA

beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Our favorite classic Thai curries, pad Thai, fried spring rolls, chicken wings, hearty fried rice, and more awaits you at Spicy Thai located in Garapan.

Established in 1996 in San Antonio where it first opened, Spicy Thai started off as a local hangout spot for garment factory workers.

"Gradually, the hangout spot turned into a small restaurant that had only two tables and it grew from there. We moved to Garapan around 2010 and started serving more of the local community and the tourists that frequented Garapan. The restaurant has been going strong for about 24 years now," said Spicy Thai restaurant manager Jeane Bracken.

"Our staying power is probably the authenticity of our food as well as the quality. We try to make sure that all of our vegetables are of good quality and all of our dishes spicy. I also think a lot of people enjoy drinking our Thai milk tea," Bracken added.

Spicy Thai is as strong as the spices that it serves. Being in business for 24 years and overcoming crisis and super typhoons, expect Spicy Thai to always flash that "open" sign at their door. "We love our community and it's a wholesome place to work and live. The locals are our friends and family," Bracken said.

"When tough times



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

For 24 years now, Spicy Thai has been serving classic Thai cuisine that locals and tourists alike love to eat.

come, it is important to help the people around us, even if it is just serving food. After Super Typhoon Yutu hit, we had a lot of people stop by to eat and use our generator to charge their electronics. We understand that this global pandemic has caused quite a big economic downturn, so to help our customers we try to provide quality food at an affordable price," Bracken added.

Like other restaurants, Spicy Thai is open for take-out only. Regular menu and ordering ala carte is available and for lunch, people can avail of their special Thai bentos that are of different combinations every day.

Samples of their bentos are: Shrimp fried rice, chicken Pad Thai, fried veggie spring rolls, and fried chicken with a free soda drink or Thai milk tea for only \$8; papaya salad (*som tum*), sweet garlic pork, white rice, fried spring rolls with one free soda drink or Thai milk

tea for only \$8; and fresh spring roll with ham for only \$3.50.

"We have two to three different kinds of bentos, but one bento is always the same every day. They are available Monday to Saturday... we also do vegan or vegetarian dishes," Bracken said.

Spicy Thai in Garapan is open from Monday to Saturday, 10am-6pm. For more information, call (670) 235-3000 or (670) 234-2989 or go to their Facebook page: Spicy Thai-Saipan.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Spicy Thai's special lunch bento.

Staywell Insurance moved to Dandan

StayWell Insurance will be relocating its Saipan office to the 1st floor of the RJ Commercial Building on Chalan Monsignor Guerrero Road across from the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s Customer Service Center in Dandan.

As part of this transition, the StayWell Saipan office

will be closed for operations on Friday, April 24, and Monday, April 27, 2020. Regular business hours will resume on Tuesday, April 28, 2020 at 8am.


For assistance during the transition period, contact StayWell's Guam office at 671-477-5091 or toll free at

1-866-782-9955.

All phone, fax, and email address remain the same as does the company's mailing address.

StayWell apologizes for the inconvenience and thanks its loyal customers for their cooperation and understanding. (PR)

Nation



Trump signs immigration order featuring numerous exemptions

President Donald Trump speaks about the coronavirus in the James Brady Press Briefing Room of the White House, Wednesday, April 22, 2020, in Washington. AP

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Donald Trump claimed Wednesday that he had signed an executive order “temporarily suspending immigration into the United States.” But experts say the order will merely delay the issuance of green cards for a minority of applicants.

Trump said his move was necessary to help Americans find work in an economy ravaged by the coronavirus.

“This will ensure that unemployed Americans of all backgrounds will be first in line for jobs as our economy reopens,” he said.

But the order includes a long list of exemptions, including for anyone who is currently in the country, those seeking entry to work as physicians and nurses, wealthy foreign investors, and the spouses and minor children of American citizens. The 60-day pause also leaves untouched the hundreds of thousands of temporary work and student visas the U.S. issues each year.

That left partisans on both sides of the immigration battle accusing Trump of being driven more by politics than policy as he tries to rally voters in an election year. Yet

experts say that, if the order is made permanent, it would also satisfy Trump’s long-stalled push to end what he calls “chain migration.” It’s the latest example of his administration using the pandemic as cover to enact immigration policy changes he has long championed.

Trump ran in 2016 on promises to crack down on both illegal and legal immigration, making the case — disputed by many — that foreign workers compete with Americans for jobs and drive down wages. While many of Trump’s efforts to dramatically upend

the nation’s immigration system have been stymied by Congress and the courts, the pandemic has allowed him to move forward with some.

Like other world leaders, Trump has restricted travel from much of the globe, including China and large swaths of Europe. The borders with Mexico and Canada have been closed to all but “essential” travel.

With consulates closed, almost all visa processing by the State Department has been suspended for weeks. And Trump has used the virus to effectively end asylum

at U.S. borders, turning away migrants, including children, by invoking a rarely used 1944 law aimed at preventing the spread of communicable diseases.

Since the vast majority of employment-based green card applicants already live in the U.S., the proclamation Trump signed Wednesday will most

affect the parents, adult children and siblings of citizens and permanent residents hoping to one day join them in the country. Trump has derided that practice as “chain immigration” and pushed Congress for years to adopt legislation that would favor what he calls “merit-based” immigration instead.

Trump: I ‘disagreed strongly’ with Georgia’s reopening plan

ATLANTA (AP)—President Donald Trump said Wednesday that he “disagreed strongly” with the decision by Georgia’s Republican governor to reopen salons, gyms and other nonessential businesses that had been shuttered to contain the coronavirus, saying, “It’s just too soon.”

During the daily White House briefing, the president indicated that while he is in favor of states reopening their economies, Gov. Brian Kemp is moving a little too fast.

Kemp announced earlier this week that as of Friday, elective medical procedures could resume in Georgia, and that barbershops, nail salons and gyms could reopen with restrictions. Limited in-restaurant dining is scheduled to resume on Monday.

The announcement immediately prompted pushback by Atlanta’s Democratic mayor, other political opponents and health experts who warned that the state has not yet taken the steps recommended under federal guidelines the Trump administration issued for re-

opening the economy safely.

Georgia ranks in the bottom 10 U.S. states in per capita testing for the coronavirus. Officials are struggling to increase testing for new infections and boost tracking of those in contact with infected people. If that isn’t done, health officials said, the state risks a quick rebound of COVID-19.

“The virus moves faster than government does,” said Dr. Jennifer Nuzzo, an epidemiologist at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security. “So if I had to bet on who would come out of the gate faster, it would be the virus.”

Trump has been stressing the importance of reopening states sooner rather than later to get the U.S. economy back on track. Just last week, the president urged his supporters on Twitter to “LIBERATE MICHIGAN!” and other Democratic-led states from stay-at-home orders — at the same time that mostly Republican governors like Kemp were taking steps to lift those restrictions.

Administration offers plan to cover COVID care for uninsured

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Trump administration announced a plan Wednesday to start paying hospitals and doctors who care for uninsured patients with COVID-19, but Democratic lawmakers and health industry groups are likely to press for more.

Under the approach detailed by Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, hospitals and doctors would submit their bills directly to the government and they would get paid at Medicare rates.

Uninsured people would not be liable for costs, and health care providers would not have to ask any questions about a patient’s immigration status, an issue that’s been cited as a barrier to care in communities with many foreign-born residents.

“This says if you don’t have insurance, go get taken care of—we have you covered,” Azar said in an interview.

The money will come from a pot of \$100 billion that Congress has approved to provide relief for the health care system, which is trying to cope with the high cost of coronavirus care while facing a cash crunch because elective surgeries and procedures have been put on hold. For COVID-19 patients who are covered by health insurance, hospitals and doctors accepting money from the relief fund would have to agree to not to send “surprise” bills for out-of-network services.

COVID-19 treatment for the uninsured could cost from \$14 billion to \$48 billion, according to a recent estimate from the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation.

Azar said the administration is not providing an estimate on what its plan will cost, but he is confident it will fit within the \$100 billion allocated by Congress. Lawmakers are

finalizing another coronavirus relief bill, expected to add \$75 billion more for the health care system.

Democrats and some health industry groups say the relief money approved by Congress should go directly to health care facilities, and the administration should cover the uninsured by expanding programs such as Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act. An HHS press release describing the plan for the uninsured says payments for their care would be made “subject to available funding.”

About 28 million people were uninsured before the pandemic hit, and that number is expected to rise sharply. Consultants at Health Management Associates estimate that 12 million to 35 million people could lose workplace coverage in the economic shutdown aimed at containing the spread of the coronavirus.

Asia

PH protests China's sea claim, weapon pointing

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippines has protested China's declaration that a Manila-claimed region in the disputed South China Sea is Chinese territory, and its aiming of weapons control radar at a Philippine navy ship, the country's top diplomat said Wednesday.

China's recent assertive moves in the disputed waterway as the world battles the coronavirus pandemic have been criticized by rival Southeast Asian claimant nations and the United States.

Philippine Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. said on Twitter that two diplomatic protests were received by the Chinese Embassy in Manila late Wednesday.

China has declared a section of Philippine-claimed territory to be part of its southernmost province of Hainan, Locsin said, adding that a "radar gun" was pointed at a Philippine navy ship in Philippine waters.

The actions were "both violations of international law and Philippine sovereignty," Locsin said.

China recently announced the establishment of two districts to administer two disputed groups of islands and reefs in the South China Sea to fortify its claim to virtually the entire waterway, among the world's busiest. One

district reportedly covers the Paracel islands and the other has jurisdiction over the Spratlys, the most hotly contested territory in the strategic waters.

The Philippines has a presence on at least nine islands and islets in the Spratlys, an offshore region where China has turned seven disputed reefs into military-fortified islands, including three with runways. Several governments led by the U.S. have condemned the island-building in recent years as dangerously provocative, but Beijing insists it has a right to build on what it claims as its territory since ancient times.

A Philippine government official told The Associated Press that a Chinese navy ship pointed its "fire control radar" at a Philippine navy ship off Commodore Reef in the Spratlys in mid-February. The radar locks weapons on a target prior to an actual attack, the official said.

Another official said that although the Chinese ship did not fire at the Philippine ship, its action was "very hostile" and "unprovoked."

The two officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the delicate incident publicly. There was no immediate comment from Chinese officials.

In addition to China and the



In this Nov. 21, 2018, file photo, demonstrators rally outside the Chinese Consulate to protest the two-day state visit in the country of President Xi Jinping in Manila, Philippines. AP

Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei have been locked in long-simmering territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

Two weeks ago, the Philippines expressed solidarity with Vietnam after Hanoi protested

what it said was the ramming and sinking of a Vietnamese fishing boat carrying eight fishermen by a Chinese coast guard ship in disputed waters near the Paracels.

The Philippine foreign office recalled that a Chinese

vessel rammed and sank a Philippine fishing boat last June, leaving 22 Filipino fishermen floating in the high seas. They were rescued by a Vietnamese fishing vessel.

Washington also expressed serious concern over the Viet-

namese vessel's sinking and called on China to remain focused on supporting efforts to combat the pandemic and "stop exploiting the distraction or vulnerability of other states to expand its unlawful claims in the South China Sea."

NKorea silence on Kim's health raises succession speculation

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—With North Korea saying nothing so far about outside media reports that leader Kim Jong Un may be unwell, there's renewed worry about who's next in line to run a nuclear-armed country that's been ruled by the same family for seven decades.

Questions about Kim's health flared after he skipped an April 15 commemoration of the 108th birthday of his grandfather, North Korea founder Kim Il Sung. It's North Korea's most important event, and Kim, 36, hadn't missed it since inheriting power from his father in late 2011.

North Korea's state media on Wednesday said Kim sent a message thanking Syria's president for conveying greetings on his grandfather's birthday, but didn't report any other activities, while rival South Korea repeated that no unusual developments had been detected in the North.

Kim has been out of the

public eye for extended periods in the past, and North Korea's secretive nature allows few outsiders to assert confidently whether he might be unwell, let alone incapacitated. Still, questions about the North's political future are likely to grow if he fails to attend upcoming public events.

Kim is the third generation of his family to rule North Korea, and a strong personality cult has been built around him, his father and grandfather. The family's mythical "Paektu" bloodline, named after the highest peak on the Korean Peninsula, is said to give only direct family members the right to rule the nation.

That makes Kim's younger sister, senior ruling party official Kim Yo Jong, the most likely candidate to step in if her brother is gravely ill, incapacitated or dies. But some experts say a collective leadership, which could end the family's dynastic rule, could also be possible.

Wuhan embraces Yangtze River as virus-hit city reopens

WUHAN, China (AP)—Bathed in golden late-afternoon light, Chen Enting snapped a photo of his ticket to commemorate his first ferry ride across the Yangtze River after a 76-day quarantine ended in the Chinese city where the coronavirus pandemic began.

The reopening of ferry services on the Yangtze, the heart of life in Wuhan for two millennia, was an important symbolic step to get business and daily life in this city of 11 million people back to normal.

Wearing goggles, gloves, a homemade mask and a black trench coat, Chen was checked by security guards in protective suits and bought a 1.5-yuan (20-cent) ferry ticket. He boarded with a dozen other passengers, some pushing electric scooters, and found a bench at the front beside a red flag with a yellow sickle. He sprayed the seat with disinfectant before sitting.

"The ferry on the Yangtze River is a symbol of Wuhan's people," said Chen, a 34-year-old cost engineer and Chinese Communist Party member.

"The choppy river symbolizes the force of life," he said, as the sun set behind the Tor-

toise Mountain TV Tower. "Although Wuhan had such an ordeal, it will flow away just like the river and receive exuberant vitality."

Wuhan was one of China's most important centers under inward-looking dynasties that had little interest in foreign trade and carried out commerce and politics over the country's vast river networks.

The city was eclipsed by the explosive rise of Shanghai, Hong Kong and other coastal cities after the ruling Communist Party set off a trade boom by launching market-style economic reforms in 1979.

Today, Wuhan is regaining its status as an economic dynamo as Chinese leaders shift emphasis from exports to developing more sustainable growth based on domestic consumer spending. The city government says more than 300 of the world's 500 biggest companies, including Microsoft Corp. and Honda Motor Co., have operations in Wuhan to get access to central China's populous market.

The metropolis was formed from three ancient cities—Wuchang, Hankou and Hanyang—at the meeting of the

Yangtze and Han rivers that grew together.

"If you are in Wuchang, you can go anywhere under heaven," said Ji Li, a University of Hong Kong historian, quoting a traditional saying.

The emperor Kublai Khan visited in the 13th century when China was part of his Mongol empire and Shanghai was a fishing village of a few thousand people.

In the mid-19th century, Wuhan became, along with Shanghai, Tianjin and Qingdao, one of a series of "treaty ports" where China's Manchu rulers were forced to give Western powers trading privileges and exempt their people from local laws.

A rebellion began on Oct. 11, 1911, in Wuhan that spread across the country and led to the breakup of the Manchu empire and the founding of President Sun Yat-sen's Republic of China.

The Yangtze's water is "very sweet," communist leader Mao Zedong said after he swallowed a mouthful while swimming in the 1950s, according to a report from the time by The Associated Press. Meandering 6,300 kilome-

ters (3,900 miles) from Tibet's Tanggula Mountains to the East China Sea, the Yangtze is the longest river in Asia and the world's third-longest.

It and the Yellow River in the north are the "mother rivers of the nation," much like America's Missouri and Mississippi or Eastern Europe's Danube. It is also the site of the Three Gorges Dam, the world's biggest hydroelectric project.

The Yangtze stars in countless poems, songs and history-making events, including the third century "Battle of Red Cliffs," which was fought by one of China's wildest strategists, Zhuge Liang. The story, involving armored battleships, has been turned into a traditional opera and a 2008 blockbuster movie directed by John Woo.

Today, Wuhan produces agricultural chemicals, 6% of China's cars, and components for smartphones, industrial machinery and optical devices for markets in Europe and North America. Skyscrapers loom above parks and ancient temples.

Ships carry goods 700 kilometers (450 miles) downriver to Shanghai by way of Nanjing, another ancient inland city.

World

Preparation, quick action aid Germany, SKorea virus fight

BERLIN (AP)—Derided by many economists for years for insisting on a balanced budget and criticized for a health care system seen as bloated and overly expensive, Germany has found itself well equipped now to weather the coronavirus pandemic.

Already applauded for early actions such as social-distancing regulations and aggressive testing seen as helping keep the death toll comparatively low, Europe's largest economy has had the financial flexibility to launch a massive rescue plan to help businesses and keep workers paid.

As the country moves this week to relax some restrictions, Chancellor Angela Merkel is pointing to South Korea, which has used its experience fighting a different coronavirus five years ago to track and stay ahead of COVID-19, as the way ahead.

Meantime in the U.S., protesters have taken to the streets—supported by President Donald Trump's tweets—to demand an end to virus-related shutdowns to help the faltering economy, even if it could lead to an increase in deaths as the health care system struggles.

"This is a crisis which, on the one hand, has probably hit the U.S. where it is most vulnerable, namely health care," said Carsten Brzeski, ING bank's chief Eurozone economist. "While at the same time it has hit the German economy where it's the strongest."



In this April 15, 2020, file photo, helper of the German Red Cross DRK in protective suit, left, takes a smear from a patient in his car during the official opening of a drive-thru COVID-19 testing center at the fair ground in Dresden, eastern Germany.

Brzeski was among those who argued for Germany to spend more to stimulate the economy as growth ground toward stagnation, but concedes now the country is in a fortunate position.

For years, balanced budget proponents argued it was prudent during good economic times to bring Germany's house in order to be prepared for a crisis. So in announcing

a 1 trillion euro (\$1.1 trillion) rescue plan for the country's 83 million people last month, Finance Minister Olaf Scholz was able to assure there was more money available, if needed.

And while Italy and Spain were faced with having to decide whether to allocate precious ICU beds to elderly patients with the most urgent need or to younger patients

with the greatest chance of survival, Germany has never had a shortage and has even taken in patients from other European countries.

Germany is now taking baby steps to ease restrictions, allowing smaller shops to reopen this week while sticking to strict social-dis-

tancing guidelines. The effect will be analyzed after two weeks to see whether infections have started to significantly climb.

Opening her Berlin toy store Wednesday for the first time in over a month, Galina Hooze said she had already received government aid and

the process was "surprisingly quick and uncomplicated."

She said it only covered the store's rent and bills, but she felt relatively secure thanks to Germany's universal health insurance and strong social safety net.

"The main thing is that everyone stays healthy and the situation doesn't become like America," she said, referring to the large number of cases and deaths in the United States.

Besides help for small businesses, Germany's aid package is designed to keep the unemployment rate down and allow workers to return quickly when possible. While Washington is sending out one-time stimulus checks to Americans, the German government plan pays at least 60% of the salary of employees who are on reduced or no hours.

As restrictions are eased, Merkel has pointed to South Korea as an example of how Germany will have to improve measures to "get ahead" of the pandemic with more testing and tracking of cases.

Experts say one reason South Korea has managed to avoid lockdowns or business bans was because of its aggressive testing and contact-tracing program that draws from its experience of fighting a different coronavirus—MERS or Middle East Respiratory Syndrome—in 2015.

UK slammed over testing amid warning over social distancing

LONDON (AP)—The British government came under sustained criticism Wednesday for responding slowly to the coronavirus pandemic as its chief medical adviser warned that social distancing measures may have to stay in place for the rest of this year and beyond.

The government reported that 759 more hospital patients with the virus had died since the last update a day earlier, taking the country's total to 18,100. In Europe, the U.K. is behind only Italy, Spain and France in virus-related deaths. The actual death toll is potentially thousands more since the British government does not include in its daily updates the people who died in care homes or other settings outside hospitals.

Daily figures for reported deaths suggest the U.K. is going through the peak of its virus outbreak, a view that Health Secretary Matt Han-

cock supported. The nation hit its highest reported daily death toll in hospitals of 980 on April 10.

Professor Chris Whitty, the chief medical adviser, said the experience of countries where infections surged earlier suggests there will not be a sudden fall in the number of daily deaths.

Whitty also warned that social distancing measures may have to stay in place for at least the rest of 2020 as it's unlikely a vaccine or anti-viral drug treatment for the new virus will be discovered any time soon. He said the probability of either being available "in the next calendar year is incredibly small." It will be up to ministers, he said, to decide upon the mix of measures when the lockdown restrictions are eased.

"I think we should be realistic about that," he said. "We're going to have to rely on other social measures, which, of

course, are very socially disruptive as everyone is finding at the moment."

Earlier, Keir Starmer, the new leader of the main opposition Labour Party, told lawmakers that a "pattern is emerging" in which the Conservative government has been too slow in putting the country into a virus lockdown, in testing people for the virus and in getting critical protective gear for medical workers.

He spoke in the first partially-online Prime Minister's Questions session in the House of Commons as lawmakers sought to strike a balance between scrutinizing the government and abiding by social distancing guidelines.

Labour lawmaker Barry Sheerman went further, slamming the government's handling of the pandemic as "shambolic"—a sign that the multi-party political consensus that formed over the pandemic is fraying.

Brazil's government, states fight for pandemic supplies

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)—Last month, Dr. Riane Azevedo pulled off a master stroke. The superintendent of the largest public hospital in the poor Brazilian state of Ceara managed to procure a highly sought-after cache of ventilators to treat the new coronavirus patients overwhelming her intensive care unit.

But just weeks before she was due to receive the ventilators, she got bad news. Her local supplier could no longer honor the agreement. Instead, she was told, the equipment was going to Brazil's federal government.

"The health ministry confiscated the ventilators for our hospital," said Azevedo from the Instituto Dr. José Frota hospital, where she had planned to open up another 40 ICU beds in May. "It makes no sense ... It's like working against yourself."

Amid a global pandemic, medical equipment needed to treat patients with COVID-19 and protect health workers has become a hot commod-

ity, with countries around the world competing for crucial supplies. In Brazil, in a scenario also seen in the United States, the competition has become internal. Some states are vying for material with the government of President Jair Bolsonaro, who is already sharply at odds with many governors over coronavirus containment measures. The Supreme Court has defended Maranhao state's purchase of ventilators.

Experts fear such political rivalries could hurt efforts to fight the pandemic in Brazil, which has the highest number of confirmed cases and deaths in the region at 45,757 and 2,906, respectively. The number of infections is thought to be far higher because many people have not been tested.

"It seems that there is a lack of trust between the federal government and governors," said Walter Cintra Ferreira Jr, a professor in health management at the Fundacao Getulio Vargas university in Sao Paulo. "What we expect from the health ministry is a quick

distribution of resources."

In Maranhao, a northeastern state next to Ceara, the local government has faced multiple setbacks in acquiring the equipment it needs. Maranhao's Secretary of Industry, Commerce and Energy, Simplicio Araújo, said the state had a delivery of 150 ventilators from a Brazilian provider seized by the federal health ministry on March 19. A second shipment from China got stuck in Germany, while a third never left the United States, Araújo said.

Undeterred, the secretary decided on a more unorthodox plan. With his Chinese contacts, Araújo orchestrated a complex scheme to bring the valuable material in a commercial freighter via Ethiopia. The operation, which mobilized some 30 people in Brazil and China for nearly three weeks, avoided further delays by skipping customs in the large airport of Sao Paulo, only declaring the content of the shipment in Maranhao's airport.

Off The Wall

Dog found 4 months after being stolen from San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Four months after a distraught San Francisco woman hired a plane to fly a search banner for her stolen dog, the blue-eyed mini Australian shepherd has been found and the two were reunited Tuesday.

Emilie Talermo, 31, said she received a call Monday from

an animal shelter in Palmdale, which is about 370 miles (600 kilometres) away in Southern California, telling her someone had just dropped off a dog with a microchip connected to her phone number.

To be sure it was her 6-year-old dog, Jackson, Talermo asked the shelter to send her photos.

Talermo launched a search on Dec. 14, when the dog with white, black, and gray fur and bright blue eyes was stolen from outside a grocery store in San Francisco's Bernal Heights neighborhood.

She set up a website, www.bringjacksonhome.com, where she offered a \$7,000 reward, "no questions asked," and even opened an account for the sweet-faced dog on Tinder. She also hired a plane to fly a banner with the search website over San Francisco and Oakland.

Friends and strangers helped by sharing on social media her pleas to find her dog, distributing thousands of flyers with the dog's photo and sending emails to veterinarians across the country asking them to be in the lookout.

On Monday, friends in Santa Monica drove to Palmdale to pick up Jackson. Talermo was unable to drive herself to Southern California, but the San Francisco Police Department detective assigned to her case offered to drive to Santa Monica and bring Jackson

back home.

The officer arrived in San Francisco with Jackson early Tuesday and let the dog out of a crate for a reunion with Talermo full of laughter, squeals and wiggles, a video of their encounter after four months apart showed.

The shelter didn't say who dropped Jackson off but whoever had him fed him well because he returned home a little chunkier and doesn't seem "too traumatized," Talermo said.

Their reunion came at the

perfect time: Talermo is moving out of San Francisco this weekend and will go home to Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Once it's safe to travel again, she plans to live in Portugal, she said.

For now, she is enjoying having Jackson home.

"He slept great, he was snoring. He has been basking in the sun in our backyard," Talermo said.

"I didn't sleep at all, I was with my eyes closed, smiling. I'm just so happy to have him back in my life," she said.

N.C. farm rents out miniature donkey to crash video calls

INDIAN TRAIL, N.C. (AP)—A miniature donkey named Mambo is getting some online love in North Carolina, where a farm is getting in on the idea of having animals spice up tedious virtual meetings during the coronavirus pandemic.

Peace N Peas Farm will rent Mambo, the 8-year-old miniature donkey, and his friends to crash company conference calls, The Charlotte Observer reported. This camera-crowding donkey is "like a pesky little brother" that "doesn't let anyone relax too long," Francie Dunlap, Mambo's owner, said.

Companies can choose other farm animals they want to

invite as guests on their video calls. According to the farm animal's meeting registration website, they include three horses, Heiren, Zeus and Eddie, along with some chickens and ducks.

"I think it would get some laughs," Dunlap said. Customers can reserve 10 minutes with the animals for \$50, and Dunlap said co-workers can also choose a virtual meeting name for the farm animal.

Since she created the website on Saturday, Dunlap said she has also gotten requests from teachers who want the animals to crash their virtual classrooms.

South Texas ER doctor self-isolates in his kids' treehouse

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas (AP)—A South Texas emergency room physician has chosen a novel place to self-isolate as he's treating patients with the novel coronavirus.

Dr. Jason Barnes made a temporary home of his children's treehouse in the backyard of the family's Corpus Christi home. He is among many health care workers who are leaving their

homes or taking other precautions to protect their families after being exposed to the virus. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death.

Barnes, a 39-year-old physician at Christus Spohn Hos-

pital Beeville and Christus Spohn Hospital South in Corpus Christi, told the Corpus Christi Caller-Times that he has spent nearly three weeks in the cabin treehouse and often shouts down to his kids if he needs something—or sometimes walks up to the back picture window door of their home to make his request.

"They're within yelling dis-

tance," Barnes said. "But I can call or go up to the glass. They know not to open the door and risk catching something."

Of course, this self-isolation means his two sons, ages 6 and 9, lose their playhouse.

"They love that thing, but they understand, so they're not missing the treehouse, per se," Barnes said. "They tell me they miss me once a day."



Dr. Jason Barnes, top right, sits in his kids' treehouse while his family plays in their backyard Saturday, April 18, 2020, in Corpus Christi, Texas. AP

Man tries to smuggle girlfriend in car trunk during lockdown

JOHANNESBURG (AP)—A man in South Africa was arrested for trying to smuggle his girlfriend from one province to another in the trunk of his car to evade coronavirus lockdown regulations, authorities said.

The woman "consented to be smuggled" and was also arrested, according to a provincial official.

The man was stopped by police at a roadblock on Friday

night traveling from Gauteng, South Africa's most populous province which includes the country's largest city, Johannesburg, and which has the largest number of confirmed cases of COVID-19. The man was trying to take his girlfriend to the neighboring Mpumalanga province, Faith Mazibuko, the official in charge of community safety in Gauteng, said in a Twitter post.

The moment when police discovered the woman in the trunk was caught on video and published by a South African media outlet. The woman, wearing jeans and a T-shirt, is seen lying in the trunk after police officers opened it.

One officer can be heard asking: "Are you OK?"

The woman then steps out the trunk with what appears to be her handbag in one hand and puts on her shoes.

South Africa has been in lockdown since March 27 to combat the spread of the virus and people are only allowed to leave their homes to buy food, medical supplies and other essentials, or if their job is classified as essential. Moving between cities and provinces is banned except for a small number of reasons, like attending a funeral, for which travel permits must be obtained.

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Florida restaurant finds NY man's wedding ring 3 years later

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP)—Three years ago, a New York couple was enjoying a meal by the water at a South Florida restaurant when the man's wedding ring slipped off his finger, through the wooden floorboards, apparently lost forever. Recently, Coconuts restaurant manager Ryan Krivoy decided to replace the wooden patio deck since the Fort Lauderdale restaurant is only serving take-out during the coronavirus pandemic. He found a gold coin, \$100 bills, piles of mud and a silver wedding ring with the inscription, "Mike & Lisa 08-21-15." The restaurant's marketing manager Sasha Formica thought it was a long shot, but decided to post a picture of the ring on Facebook. The post was shared about 5,000 times, making its way to Mike and Lisa. Three days later, the happy wife called to claim the ring, the Sun Sentinel reported. She even texted pictures of her and her husband eating there in 2017 as proof. The restaurant shipped the ring back to the couple. Krivoy took the \$100 bills and a rare coin from 1855 that may be worth as much as \$2,000 for the tip jar to share with the staff.

Florida jogger dons costume to cheer up neighborhood

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—More than a week after Easter, there's still one mythical creature hopping around a Florida neighborhood trying to spread happiness. Corey Jurgensen, 40, donned a 7-foot (2-meter)-tall inflatable unicorn costume to jog, jump and dance around the streets near her Tampa home last week in an effort to cheer up neighbors stuck indoors amid the coronavirus pandemic, The Tampa Bay Times reported. Jurgensen originally purchased the inflatable for Halloween, but gave it a new life on March 21 when a friend from Washington saw a similar act on social media and challenged Jurgensen to suit up and show hers off. Since then, Jurgensen told the newspaper she has galloped around streets within a mile (kilometer) radius of her home multiple times—drawing honks from passing cars, claps from families standing on porches and many, many photos posted to social media. Though the massage therapist has not been able to work her regular job in weeks, she said her new calling is providing a temporary distraction. "There is nothing better than being a unicorn," Jurgensen told the Tampa Bay Times. "Everyone smiles when they see a unicorn."

Science & Technology

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iran's Revolutionary Guard launched its first satellite into space Wednesday, dramatically revealing what experts described as a secret military space program that could advance its ballistic missile development amid wider tensions between the Islamic Republic and the U.S.

Using a mobile launcher at a new launch site, the Guard said it put the "Noor," or "Light," satellite into a low orbit circling the Earth. While the U.S., Israel and other countries declined to immediately confirm the satellite reached orbit, their criticism suggested they believed the launch happened.

Iranian state TV late Wednesday showed footage of what it said was the satel-

lite and said it had orbited the earth within 90 minutes. It said the satellite's signals were being received.

The launch comes as Iran has abandoned all the limitations of its tattered nuclear deal with world powers that President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from in 2018. Trump's decision set off a monthslong series of escalating attacks that culminated in a U.S. drone strike in January that killed a top Iranian general in Iraq, followed by Tehran launching ballistic missiles at American soldiers in Iraq.

As the world grapples with the coronavirus pandemic and historically low oil prices, the missile launch may signal a new willingness to take risks by Iran. Trump himself later

tweeted he told the U.S. Navy "to shoot down and destroy any and all Iranian gunboats if they harass our ships at sea," both raising energy prices and renewing the risk of conflict.

"Now that you have the maximum pressure campaign, Iran doesn't have that much to lose anymore," said Fabian Hinz, a researcher at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in Monterey, California.

The three-stage satellite launch took off from Iran's Central Desert, the Guard said, without elaborating.

Hinz said based on state media images, the launch appeared to have happened at a previously unacknowledged Guard base near Shahroud, Iran, some 330 kilometers (205 miles) northeast of Tehran. The base is in Semnan province, which hosts the Imam Khomeini Spaceport from which Iran's civilian space program operates.

The paramilitary force said it used a "Qased," or "Messenger," satellite carrier to put the device into space, a previously unheard-of system. It described the system as using both liquid and solid fuel. Such a system may allow Iran to more quickly fuel a rocket, something crucial in an offensive weapon system, Hinz

said, while stressing more information was needed about the launch.

Wednesday marked the 41st anniversary of the founding of the Guard by Iran's late leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. An image of the rocket that carried the satellite showed it bore a Quranic verse typically recited when going on a journey, as well as a drawing of the Earth with the word Allah in Farsi wrapped around it. It remained unclear what the satellite it carried does.

"Today, the world's powerful armies do not have a comprehensive defense plan without being in space, and achieving this superior technology that takes us into space and expands the realm of our abilities is a strategic achievement," said Gen. Hossein Salami, the head of the Guard.

The Guard, which operates

its own military infrastructure parallel to Iran's regular armed forces, is a hard-line force answerable only to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

International criticism of the launch came quickly.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said "Iran needs to be held accountable for what it's done."

At a Pentagon news conference Wednesday, senior officials called the satellite launch a provocation.

"We view this as further evidence of Iran's behavior that is threatening in the region," said David Norquist, the deputy secretary of defense.

In this photo released Wednesday, April 22, 2020, by Sepahnews, an Iranian rocket carrying a satellite is prepared for launch from an undisclosed site believed to be in Iran's Semnan province. AP

Iran Guard reveals secret space program in satellite launch



Science Matters

Two tests for coronavirus

These tests are used for detecting infections, including Covid-19, the disease caused by a novel coronavirus; the tests indicate different things and have different purposes.

Is viral DNA or RNA* present?

PCR test (polymerase chain reaction) amplifies genetic material from the virus in the person's body so it can be detected

HOW THE TESTS WORK

*Some viruses multiply their DNA; some spread their RNA (molecule related to DNA)

Has the body reacted to the virus?

Serological test (antibody test) detects antibodies to the virus produced by an infected person's immune system

Swab taken from nose (for Covid-19) or mouth

COLLECTING A SAMPLE

Blood sample drawn

No virus is present but person may still be vulnerable to infection **OR** person has been infected, recovered and is now free of all traces of virus

• If person has symptoms, they are due to some other virus or bacterium

WHAT A NEGATIVE TEST MEANS

Person has not been exposed to virus and has not produced antibodies to combat it

Person has no immunity and may still become infected later

Virus is present

• If person has symptoms, the symptoms are due to an active viral infection
• If person does not have symptoms, an infection is under way and may cause symptoms later

WHAT A POSITIVE TEST MEANS

Person was exposed to virus and made antibodies to it

• If person has symptoms, they are due to an active infection
• If person does not have symptoms, person has been infected, has recovered and is probably now immune to virus

Percentage of population that is currently infected

WHAT TESTING REVEALS

Percentage of population that has been exposed

* Some viruses have DNA and attack by replicating it; some spread their RNA (a molecule related to DNA)

Source: US National Institutes of Health
Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Tribune News Service

Video call sound quality limits music

After last week's column on PC and Mac video calling (see tinyurl.com/v4zeggr), several readers wanted to know if the sound quality could be improved. Dale Lewellyn of Bloomington, Minn., wanted to know if sound could be adjusted so people could hear one another at the same time. Marcia Edwards of Brownsville, Texas, wondered what could be done about the time lag on video calls that prevents playing music with friends. Peter Brennan of Minneapolis asked if video calling services offered a "virtual room" where all musicians could hear one another without any time delay.

A: There are a couple of factors involved in video call sound quality—the technology being used by the video calling firm, and the unavoidable time lag in video conferencing.

■ Some video calling services, such as Zoom, support what's called full-duplex audio. Full duplex means that sound simultaneously travels both ways, so people on either end of the video call can speak (or sing) at the same time. Other services, such as Skype, support only half-duplex sound, so only one person can talk at a time.

■ Time lag—the delay between when one person on a video call speaks (or sings) and the other person hears it—is a significant problem for musicians.

Zoom has said that it tries to keep video calling time lag (also called latency) to about 150-thousandths of a second (also called 150 milliseconds), a level at which it isn't very noticeable for speaking.

But music is different. Music experts say that a time lag of seven-thousandths of a second can affect a performer's ability to stay with the beat, and that a delay of 15-thousandths to 30-thousandths of a second will be noticed by listeners (see tinyurl.com/y8kzjp3x).

Video call time lag is caused by three things: how long it takes a signal to travel through your internet service provider and across the internet; how long it takes video calling software to process the data; and

TECH Q&A By STEVE ALEXANDER

Star Tribune (Minneapolis)



Steve Alexander covers technology for the Minneapolis Star Tribune.

Readers may write to him at Tech Q&A, 425 Portland Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn. 55488-0002; email: steve.j.alexander@gmail.com. Please include a full name, city and phone number.

how fast your home network is. The only one of those you can optimize is your home network (see tinyurl.com/rxnj8a7).

Unfortunately, the video calling services don't have an online "virtual room" where musicians could perform together without any time lag. The closest thing to it are "collaborative apps" that let musicians share or combine their own recordings through a central website (see tinyurl.com/yd5a2bvl).

Reboots

Last week's column listed the wrong website for downloading the Mac version of Facebook Messenger, which enables video calling. You should instead download it from the Mac App Store. My apologies for the mistake.

If you downloaded a Mac program from the incorrect website, you need to get rid of it. It's not the real Facebook app and contains "adware" that will display unwanted advertising. Rather than simply uninstall it, download the free version of Malwarebytes (see tinyurl.com/jf29qxx). Let it scan your Mac, then click to "quarantine" any malware it finds.

In an earlier column (see tinyurl.com/w9nfszy), the web address of RetroFloppy was garbled. RetroFloppy (tinyurl.com/ubb4jqp) converts old computer disk files to modern storage formats.

Life & Style

Video shows thief stole van Gogh painting with sledgehammer

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP)—All it took was a few sturdy swings with a sledgehammer and a prized painting by Vincent van Gogh was gone.

A Dutch crime-busting television show has aired security camera footage showing how

an art thief smashed his way through reinforced glass doors at a museum in the early hours of March 30. He later hurried out through the museum gift shop with a Vincent van Gogh painting tucked under his right arm and the sledgehammer in



This image released by the Groninger Museum on Monday March 30, 2020, shows Dutch master Vincent van Gogh's painting titled "The Parsonage Garden at Nuenen in Spring" which was stolen from the Singer Museum in Laren, Netherlands, Monday March 30, 2020. AP

Whitney Houston biopic in the works

LOS ANGELES

(AP)—A feature film about Whitney Houston's life is in the works from the screenwriter of "Bohemian Rhapsody." The biopic is being shepherded by the Whitney Houston Es-



Houston

tate, music producer Clive Davis and Primary Wave Music, the partners said Wednesday.

"I Wanna Dance with Somebody" will follow Houston from obscurity to pop stardom and promises to be "frank about the price that superstardom exacted," according to the announcement.

"From all my personal and professional experience with Whitney from her late teenage years to her tragic premature death, I know the full Whitney Houston story has not yet been

told," Davis said in a statement. He said McCarten's script will finally reveal the "whole Whitney whose vocal genius deeply affected the world while she fiercely battled the demons that were to be her undoing."

Houston sold over 200 million records worldwide during her 25-year career and won six Grammys, 16 Billboard Music Awards and two Emmys before her death in 2012.

McCarten, who has gotten Oscar nominations for his scripts for "The Theory of Everything," "The Darkest Hour" and "The Two Popes," said in a statement that he's grateful to be working closely with the people who knew Houston best.

his left hand.

Police hope that publicizing the images will help them track down the thief who stole Van Gogh's "The Parsonage Garden at Nuenen in Spring 1884" from the Singer Laren Museum while it was shut down due to coronavirus containment measures.

Nobody has been arrested in the theft and the painting, which was on loan from another Dutch museum, the Groninger Museum, when it was stolen, is still missing.

Police withheld other footage from inside the museum in Laren, a town east of Amsterdam, to protect their inves-

tigation. They also did not air video from outside the museum of the thief leaving.

Singer Laren managing director Evert van Os stressed in a statement that the footage didn't show all of the burglary and defended security, which he said had been approved by the museum's

insurance company.

"The burglar broke through a number of doors and several layers of security that had been approved by security experts," Van Os said. "The footage released does not therefore allow any conclusions to be drawn as to the quality of security at Singer Laren."

Charlize Theron launches initiative to fight gender violence

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Actress Charlize Theron and her foundation are committing \$1 million to coronavirus relief efforts, with half of that dedicated to fighting gender-based violence resulting from the outbreak.

The Charlize Theron Africa Outreach Project announced Wednesday that under an initiative called Together For Her, \$500,000 would go to domestic violence shelters and community-based programs

fighting gender-based violence. Advocates have warned that domestic abuse is a major danger during the pandemic as lockdown orders sometimes mean women at risk are confined at home with their abusers, with little means of escape. Children are also imperiled.

The Oscar-winning actress will be supporting efforts in the United States and in her home



Theron

country of South Africa, according to a statement from the foundation. Additional funds will be designated both domestically and internationally through two partner organizations, CARE and the Entertainment Industry Foundation.

"As the global spread of COVID-19 has forced people indoors, life has become even

more dangerous for women experiencing domestic violence, especially for those who are most marginalized and are at increased risk of experiencing violence," the statement said.

It said donations to Together for Her would be directed toward services such as shelters, support and counseling, helplines, crisis intervention, health services, legal services and other forms of support for women and children experiencing domestic violence.

Woman questions why man won't pull trigger on divorce

DEAR ABBY: I am a 39-year-old woman, recently separated. I have been seeing a 45-year-old man who is also separated, but not divorced from his wife. We have been a couple for about a year. I don't understand why he doesn't get a divorce.

When his wife (who has also been seeing someone for more than a year) found out we were seeing each other, it got ugly. She came to our place of employment (her ex and I work in the same place, different departments) and tried to get me fired. Fortunately, she was unsuccessful, and she tried to get physical. She told me she is his wife—she told him as well—and said she tells him what to do, and she "owns him." At that point I had to stop seeing him.

After a month apart, I became really depressed, and we hooked back up. We go out and enjoy each other's company, and the sex is AMAZING. He told me he has never felt like this with any other woman nor has he ever introduced anyone to his daughter (who loves me dearly). We are taking things slower and more carefully, but I am falling in love.

He tells me he misses me when we are intimate and how grateful he is for me, but it isn't enough. I want more, but I don't want to scare him away. Is this a dead end? Should I be patient, or should I just walk away?

IT'S COMPLICATED IN THE EAST

DEAR COMPLICATED: I have to wonder why, after a year, you are not in the process of being divorced. You also

need some straight answers about what keeps this man under his wife's thumb. The woman appears to have serious mental issues. Is the reason financial? Emotional? Once you know, you will have a better idea of what to do.

I am troubled by the fact that your boyfriend's wife is so volatile. As it stands, that woman is controlling not only him but also you, and that's not healthy.

DEAR ABBY: I was raised in a very strict household. At 19, I left home and never looked back. Today, I am 54, divorced and own my own home.

My mother passed away, and my father moved in with me a few months ago because he didn't like living alone. I have had to make several adjustments to accommodate him.

The problem is, he's extremely traditional and refuses to change his way of thinking where I am concerned. In his eyes, I am still his child, and I should respect and abide by his rules.

I have a boyfriend who lives several miles away. When he visits, I would like him to spend the night with me in my room. My dad insists (demands) that my boyfriend sleep on the couch or in the guest bedroom. He has informed me that it is my choice, but if I don't abide by his wishes (demands), he will refuse to talk with my boyfriend, which undoubtedly will cause stress in my relationship.

I have told my father that I am a grown woman and that I refuse to give up my freedom to accommodate him in this area. After all, this is my home. How should I handle this?

ALL GROWN UP IN ARKANSAS

DEAR ABBY

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



DEAR ALL GROWN: If you knuckle under to Dear Old Dad's demands, you are making a big mistake. Sit him down, "remind" him that you are no longer a little girl and if he cannot accept that you are an adult with needs of your own and be respectful to your boyfriend, he will no longer be welcome to live under your roof. Do not try to placate him or you will be living the rest of your father's life in a second childhood, and it won't be a happy one.

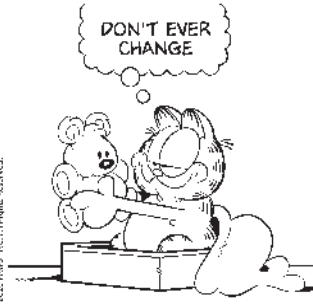
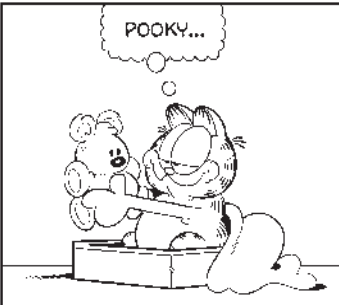
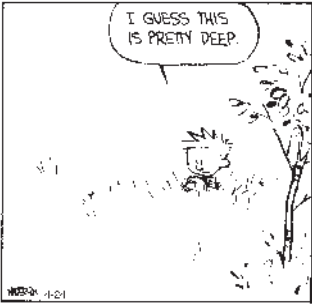
Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$16 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

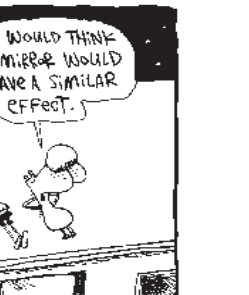
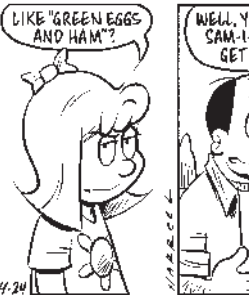
Calvin and Hobbes



Garfield®



Adam@home



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 PC alter-native

4 Baseball stats

8 Pizzazz

12 Punk rock offshoot

13 Roughly

14 Utah ski resort

15 Parrot variety

17 FBI guy

18 Grade sch.

19 Easy gaits

20 "Thor" actor

22 Swiss artist

24 Hardy lass

25 Relaxed

29 Tempe sch.

30 Tender spots

31 Feathery neck-piece

32 Anti-chapping sticks

34 Addict

35 Jazzy Fitzgerald

36 Valerie Harper sitcom

37 Lose a staring contest

40 Tart

41 Protracted

42 Kid's meal

46 Start of a spell

47 Author

48 Rock's Brian

49 Cad

50 Pooches

51 "Cock-a-doodle-!"

2 "I love," to Livy

3 Conceals, as a crime

4 Judicial garb

5 Edge

6 Leb. neighbor

7 Turf

8 Capital of Croatia

9 Ticklish Muppet

10 Sports figure?

11 Catches some rays

16 Yale students

19 Turner and Danson

20 Slanted type (Abbr.)

21 He loved Lucy

22 Fate

23 Fibs

25 Lounge

26 En-grossed

27 Not single-sex

28 Supergirl's first name

30 Polio vaccine discoverer

33 Tiger type

34 "Nope!"

36 Boulders

37 Humdrum

38 Earring site

39 Concerning

40 Unforeseen problem

42 Cover

43 Mil. morale booster

44 Lennon's love

45 Tic-tac-toe loser

Solution time: 25 mins.

Yesterday's answer 4-24

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jack Quaid, 28; David Boudia, 31; Kelly Clarkson, 38; Barbra Streisand, 78.

Happy Birthday: Be open to suggestions but honest with yourself about what you need. Keep your life and possibilities in perspective if you want to get ahead. Putting in quality time and effort without drama and fuss will be essential. High energy, coupled with enthusiasm and discipline, will manifest into something worthwhile. Personal improvement is encouraged. Your numbers are 4, 12, 23, 25, 31, 36, 48.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Start early with the intent to finish what you start. Use your intelligence to sort out differences, not to argue or get in to a standoff that is likely to damage your reputation or dismantle a meaningful relationship. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Do what needs to be done, and stick to your budget. Stubbornness, anger and impatience will lead to an emotional scene. Distance yourself from trouble, unpredictable situations and unrealistic individuals. Time is on your side, so slow down and do things properly. ***

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Distance yourself from anyone who asks for too much or isn't forthright when it comes to sharing information. Channel your energy into personal gains, physical fitness and ridding yourself of any lingering negativity in your life. Surround yourself with upbeat people. ***

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Participate in events that interest you, or volunteer your time to an organization that shares your be-

liefs. Listen, learn and develop a pattern that will help you incorporate what you know, what you do well and what brings you joy into the mix. ****

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You may understand what you are trying to accomplish, but reaching your goal won't be that easy if you let others interfere. Discipline, along with physical input, will be required. Spend time with someone you love, and it will spark your enthusiasm. **

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): A change will be refreshing. Start watching a new series, or plan to do something that will help you get in touch with friends through social media. Digest the information you gather, and come up with a plan tailored to your needs. *****

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Don't get angry about the things you can't change. Concentrate on what you can do to make a difference. Choose to be moderate and make adjustments that will encourage a less stressful environment. Choose peace, love and personal growth. ***

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Someone you encounter will have a positive influence on something you've been trying to develop. An opportunity will open up if you check out online job opportunities or attend an online event that attracts like-minded people. A partnership will require an adjustment. ***

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): A manipulative individual will cause chaos in your life if you are gullible or too accommodating. Be smart when it comes to relationships, and question anything or anyone who is persistent or nosy. Keep private matters to yourself. ***

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Stick close to home, protect your possessions and relationships, and don't believe everything you hear. Someone will lead you astray if given a chance. Do your fact-finding before you take action. Home improvements are favored. *****

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Emotional difficulties with someone close to you will surface. Don't let the changes that unfold ruin your plans. Stick to what works best for you, and engage in activities that are positive and geared toward bringing you closer to someone you love. **

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Greater involvement in your community or a group you belong to will bring high returns. An opportunity to slide in to a better position looks promising. Get together with an old friend, or reconnect with someone you used to work alongside. ****

Birthday Baby: You are adaptable, unique and helpful. You are intelligent and energetic. Visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

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WONDERWORD By DAVID CUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

POLICE CAR CHASE

Solution: 10 letters

M C F D T S E R R A M A R D T
A C E E A E O G N I N N U R L
C L I L L W R A G E G D O D O
H A H F D L E E T R A P I S R
S E T Y F L T T I M E A F S T
A T H G U A C C E R C C B E N
D S O D W H R S E C O O V K O
E B E A A A N T O R L I R C
E A Y O S E P M N T L L A C A
P R S H F O P E E N I G N E T
S R T F C L R D R E S I U R C
H E O I I E N R E V I R D C H
G L L C D A O R I W O L L O F
I E E V I T I G U F N T O P S
H D N O I T N E T T A P E S A

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Accomplice, Arrest, Attention, Barreled, Bolted, Call, Catch, Caught, Chaos, Collision, Control, Cops, Cornered, Crash, Cruiser, Dashcam, Dodge, Drama, Driver, Elude, Engine, Fled, Flee, Follow, Fugitive, Getaway, Helicopter, High-speed, Live, Offense, Rage, Reckless, Report, Road, Rowdy, Running, Spot, Steal, Stolen, Tape, Thief, Time, Traffic, Trap

Yesterday's Answer: Recipient

Jo's Jewels Collector's Edition is back by popular demand. Purchase online at www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6483.

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Mavs, 76ers made offers to Bulls for Jordan



NEW YORK—The Bulls were lucky to nab Michael Jordan with the third overall pick, but in an era where bigmen were valued over guards they weren't the only ones with their eye on the future GOAT.

"Philadelphia [76ers] had made a strong offer for Michael. Dallas [Mavericks] had made a strong offer for Michael," former Bulls general manager Rod Thorn told David Kaplan on his radio show.

"There were a couple of other teams that had inquired about the pick, their offers weren't as good as those two but yeah, there were people who were certainly interested in Michael."

Fortunately Thorn resisted those trade offers and took Jordan. People like Dean Smith and Bobby Knight were singing Jordan's praises early on, so it wasn't exactly a secret.

"I would go every year when I was doing my scouting and when I was a GM and go to North Carolina at the end of the year. Dean would let me sit in their film room and watch any tape they had, a lot of the final scouting on ACC players in particular was done at the time," Thorn said.

"The year that Jordan came out and I'm watching the tape and he is glaringly the best player of all these players. I went in to talk to Dean at the end of the day, and I said you know this guy is so good on tape and the few times I've seen him play in person, what do you think?"

"Dean said 'I'd never say it publicly because that's not how we do it here at North Carolina, but he is the most talented player I've had.'"

And Knight coached Jordan in the Olympics and Jordan at the Olympic trials.

One of the biggest draft day blunders in any sport is the Portland Trail Blazers picking Sam Bowie over Jordan.

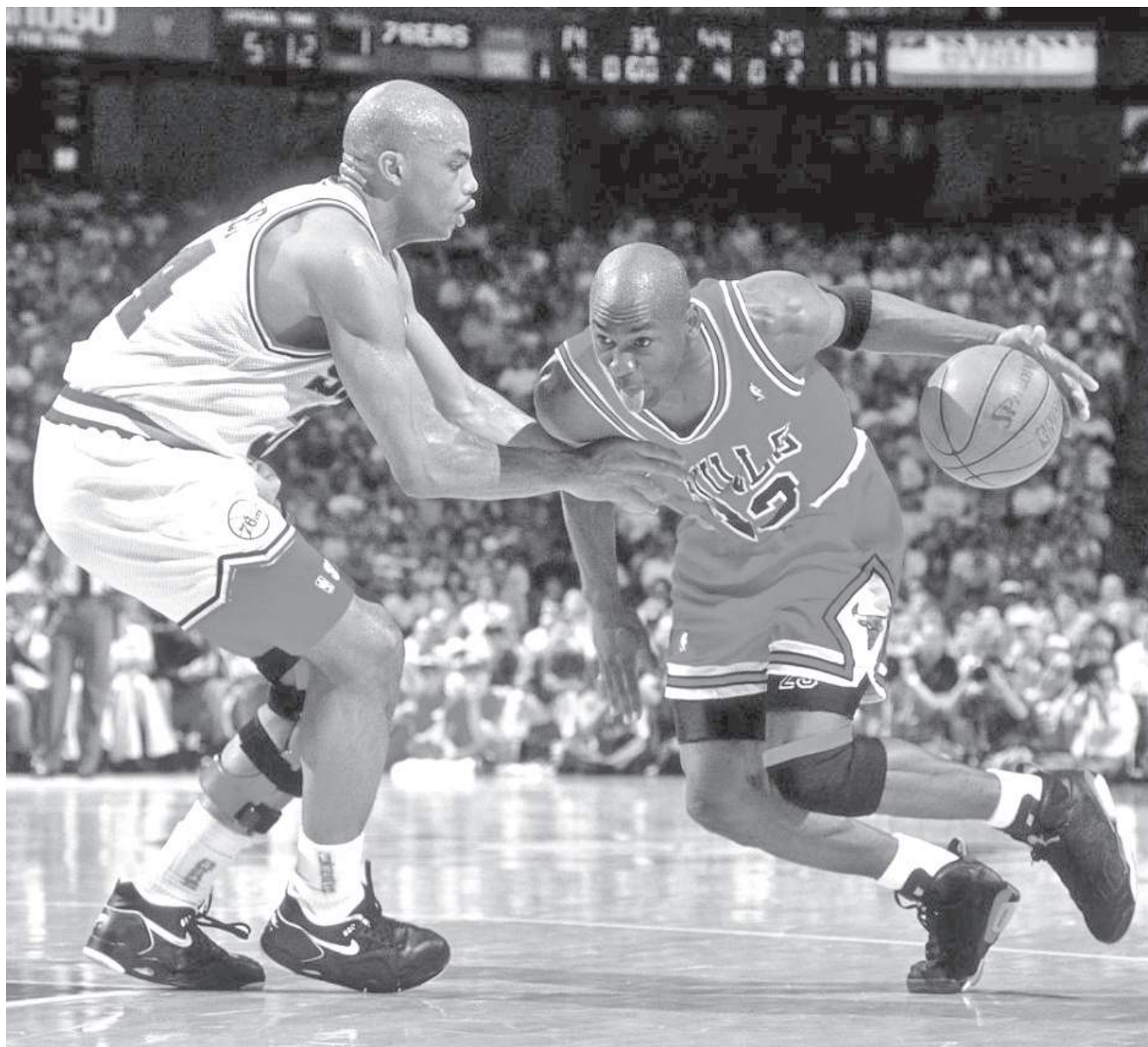
Bowie made the NBA All-Rookie team, his lone accolade, while Jordan won six championships in Chicago en route to becoming the greatest basketball player in history.

And the Bulls knew one month in advance of the draft that Portland wouldn't pick Jordan.

VanVleet skeptical about NBA season resuming

In Toronto, Raptors guard Fred VanVleet is bracing for the suspended NBA season not to resume and if it does, he isn't convinced health concerns can be adequately addressed as long as the coronavirus pandemic remains a threat.

"I think everybody is just preparing for the worst case



AP
In this May 13, 1991 file photo, Chicago Bulls' Michael Jordan, right, drives against the Philadelphia 76ers' Charles Barkley during an NBA game in Philadelphia.

scenario, the season being canceled," Van Vleet said in a conference call Wednesday. "We have to do what we have to do to try to shoulder the hit as best we can for us as players and owners and the league, while also working to try to resume as best we can."

Speaking from his home in Rockford, Illinois, VanVleet—a self-described skeptic—questioned whether a return to action could be carried out safely, and said he doesn't relish the idea of playing in front of empty arenas.

"I could play anywhere," he said. "Do I want to play in front of no people? No, but does it really matter? At this point, I don't think anybody is going to have a quarrel with what happens, as long as people's health is first and foremost, which we know it probably won't be."

"If our league is going to be a leader in terms of public health and public safety and player safety, you've got to follow the guidelines of what the virus is speaking to you, so the odds are probably against us in terms of that," VanVleet added. "But money, right? So, I think they'll find a way somehow, some way and try to make it happen. I could definitely see it going either way. I wouldn't be surprised if we didn't come back and I wouldn't be surprised if we do come back."

NBA Commissioner Adam

Silver has said player safety will be a top priority in whatever decision is made about this season while stressing that everything is on the table. After last week's Board of Governors meeting, Silver said "when you're dealing with human

life, that trumps anything else we could possibly talk about."

Chris Paul, the Oklahoma City guard and president of the National Basketball Players Association, has spoken with Silver often since the shutdown. Paul said Wednesday

that the union and the league are seeking answers, but they just don't exist yet.

"This is a situation where no one knows," Paul said. "The virus is actually in complete control."

The coronavirus pandemic also will also have an impact

Federer raises prospect of merging men's and women's tours

NEW YORK (AP)—Roger Federer used a string of tweets Wednesday to call for the merger of the governing bodies for the men's and women's professional tennis tours, sparking a conversation among players and fans.

The 20-time Grand Slam champion's comments drew plenty of support, including from rival Rafael Nadal and 12-time major singles champion Billie Jean King, who founded the WTA and has long said men and women should share one tour.

"Am I the only one thinking that now is the time for men's and women's tennis to be united and come together as one?" Federer wrote, leading to a flurry of responses online.

The professional era in tennis started in 1968, and the ATP was founded in 1972, running the men's game since. The women's WTA began a year later. The idea, not new, but spotlighted by Federer: combine the two into a single body.

"It probably should have happened a long time ago," Federer wrote. "But maybe now is really the time."

King agreed, noting that the suspension of the tours until at least mid-July because of the coronavirus pandemic might offer an opportunity to study restructuring tennis.

"Now I think it's a possibility. A real possibility. And why not?" King said Wednesday. "I just think this would be so huge for our sport. I'm just so happy Roger said something."

Federer's statements came a day after the ATP and WTA announced they were joining with the four Grand Slam tournaments and the International Tennis Federation to form a relief fund that will offer money to lower-ranked players in need of financial help because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

As with plenty of other in-

dustries, tennis has been hit hard by the recent economic downturn because of a loss of income from things like ticket sales and media rights.

"Our sport has a big opportunity if we can come together in the spirit of collaboration and unity," ATP CEO Andrea Gaudenzi said in an email. "Recent cooperation

between governing bodies has only strengthened my belief that a unified sport is the surest way to maximize our potential and to deliver an optimal experience for fans on-site, on television and online. To that end, I welcome the views of our players."

Simona Halep and Garbiñe Muguruza, both recent Wimbledon champions, were among the players taking to social media to give a thumbs-up to Federer's idea.

Nadal, a 19-time major champion, wrote on Twitter to Federer: "As you know

per our discussions, I completely agree that it would be great to get out of this world crisis with the union of men's and women's tennis in one only organisation."

There has never been a united tennis tour, but male and female players do play at the same tournaments several times each year, including at the four Grand Slam tournaments.

Much of the season, however, they are completely separate.

"It's too confusing for the fans when there are different ranking systems, different logos, different websites, different tournament categories," Federer said in a response to a reader's comment.

He emphasized he was "not talking about merging competition on the court" but streamlining the leadership and organization of tennis.

"These are tough times in every sport," Federer said, "and we can come out of this with 2 weakened bodies or 1 stronger body."

Gronk healthy and fire burns to play with Brady



TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Rob Gronkowski planted the seed for a NFL comeback when he played catch with Tom Brady two months ago.

He told the six-time Super Bowl champion quarterback he was getting an itch to play again if the “right opportunity” presented itself.

Brady, on the verge of becoming a free agent and signing a two-year, \$50 million contract with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, was more than intrigued.

“We had a little conversation. There was no pressure on either side. We actually got together just to throw the football,” Gronkowski recalled Wednesday, a day after the Bucs completed a trade to acquire the four-time All-Pro tight end from the New England Patriots.

“We rarely talked about what his decision was going to be or where I’m at. But we did talk about ... I’m kind of getting that fire underneath me again. I told him I’m definitely interested in the decision you make and ... even if you go back to the Patriots ... there’s a possible chance I will definitely love to reconnect,” Gronkowski added. “That’s where the conversation started ... and he was fired up.”

The Bucs sent a fourth-round pick—No. 139 overall—to the Patriots in exchange for a seventh-round selection (No. 241) and Gronkowski, who retired 13 months ago after nine seasons and winning three Super Bowl rings with New England.

The 30-year-old said he will always respect and appreciate the time he spent playing for coach Bill Belichick and Patriots owner Robert Kraft, but he’s just as excited about starting anew with Brady in Tampa.

“I’m not going to sit here and say it’s that easy of an organization to play for,” Gronkowski added of his stint with the Patriots. “I do know ... it gets you right. It gets you mentally right. It gets you physically right. What I’ve learned there, I’m definitely going to take it with me and apply it to my daily life, big time.”

Gronkowski was one of the most dominant tight ends in the league



In this Feb. 3, 2019 file photo, New England Patriots' Rob Gronkowski (87) catches a pass in front of Los Angeles Rams' Cory Littleton (58) during the second half of the NFL Super Bowl 53 in Atlanta.

with the Patriots, compiling 521 career receptions for 7,861 yards and 79 touchdowns—third-most TD receptions by a tight end in NFL history behind Antonio Gates (116) and Hall of Famer Tony Gonzalez (111).

The five-time Pro Bowl selection is

one of just four tight ends, along with Gonzalez, Jason Witten and Travis Kelce, who’ve had four seasons with 1,000-plus yards receiving. With 28 career 100-yard games, Gronkowski ranks second to Gonzalez (31).

He said he walked away from the

game after helping the Patriots win the Super Bowl in February 2019 to give his body a chance to heal from numerous injuries during his career.

“I was getting opportunities throughout the whole retirement to come back, which is special. ... But

I’ve always said I wouldn’t come back unless I’m feeling good, feeling healthy and feeling like I’m ready to go,” Gronkowski said. “This is the time. It definitely wasn’t last year. My body 100% needed a rest.”

During his nine seasons in New England, the Patriots won nine division titles and appeared in eight AFC championship games, advancing to five Super Bowls. In 16 career playoff games, he has 81 catches for 1,163 yards and 12 TDs.

The Bucs have played just 15 post-season games in the club’s 44-year history, none since 2007.

That’s expected to change with Brady and Gronkowski joining an offense that led the NFL in passing, and ranked third overall. The Pro Bowl receiver tandem of Mike Evans and Chris Godwin that caught 153 passes for 2,490 yards and 17 TDs last season figures to be the best Brady has had to work with since Hall of Famer Randy Moss began a three-plus season stint with the Patriots in 2007.

With O.J. Howard and Cameron Brate on the roster, tight end also was considered a strength even before Gronkowski was added to the mix.

Brady, though, is what made moving to Tampa, where Gronkowski once owned a home, especially appealing.

He said he’s remained in shape and tipped the scales at 250 pounds Wednesday, about 12 to 15 below his normal playing weight.

“Playing with Tom is special. ... We have a great chemistry out there. Every time we get together, it’s just like the old days. It doesn’t matter if we take a month off or six months apart, we just go out there and we’re throwing the ball just like it’s a normal practice,” the tight end said.

“He was like the appetizer of the whole meal. He got me hooked when he went down to Tampa,” Gronkowski added. “I saw what was down there, just the opportunity to go down there and play with that type of offense. They’ve got some special wide receivers out there. They’ve got other great tight ends. ... It’s just the right opportunity.”

From his home in the New York City suburbs, Roger Goodell will handle perhaps his most visible annual chore—announcing draft picks.

Visible, but this time virtual. Not since the NFL draft became a televised event in 1980 has it been stripped to the basics like this year’s proceedings will be.

Beginning Thursday night, as a safeguard against the coronavirus pandemic, adhering to medical and governmental advice and restrictions, selectors will work from their homes. Prospects will be at their homes, too.

Goodell, who ordered all team facilities closed on March 26 and has extended that ban indefinitely, won’t be sharing hugs with Joe Burrow or Chase Young or any of the other 32 first-rounders. He

Logistics share draft spotlight with Burrow, Young

will offer congratulations remotely, but otherwise this will be the barest of drafts.

And certainly not the easiest.

“Everyone is really particular about how they go through the drafts, right?” Falcons general manager Thomas Dimitroff says. “They want to have the draft rooms. They want to have all the technology. It takes a lot of people taking a lot of deep breaths on it, as you can imagine.”

“Again, I really believe most teams are quite set and I would say from our standpoint, though technology is going to have to switch and we’re going to be asked to work out of our own homes, I feel like we have such a really sound personnel department.

... We feel honestly if this was moved up 10 days ahead and we had to draft out of the back of a shed we’d be prepared to capitalize on it and do an adept job with it.”

Whoa! There were some teams that wanted the draft pushed back a few weeks. The main issue naturally, has been the collection of information.

With no in-person interviews outside of the brief ones at the scouting combine, few pro days and, perhaps most essentially, no in-depth physical exams conducted by team doctors, the deep data dives have turned into snorkeling exercises.

That didn’t hurt the likes of LSU quarterback Burrow, who barring a stunning move by the Bengals, will be the

first name Goodell calls out Thursday. Same for Young, Ohio State’s dominant defender and probably the best player in this crop.

But guys carrying question marks? Guys who had medical issues and didn’t get the usual re-check following the scouting combine? Or players who didn’t get invited to the combine? Or collegians with off-field issues?

“That’s what you miss out on,” Giants GM Dave Gettleman says of the lack of in-person encounters. “By not having pro days, you also miss that personal contact. Watching guys among their peers and how they operate, how they’re received. That tells a lot when you just watch a kid in those circumstances.

“Obviously, when we would go to workouts, a lot of times the night before, our coach and scout that would be at the pro day would take one, two or three of the players out to dinner and have some conversation that way. We’re losing the personal touch points. We have the visual touch point, but we’re really missing out on the personal touch point.”

Arizona Cardinals coach Kliff Kingsbury isn’t fretting the missing info. It’s 2020, after all.

“With technology these days it feels like it is in person,” he said of the sort-of meetings. “You have the FaceTime, you have the Zoom meetings. Honestly, a lot of these kids are most comfortable doing that. They’re

on FaceTime 12 hours a day with their friends and people, so you get the most comfortable version of them on that FaceTime, honestly.

“The in-person workouts, seeing them move around and do things like that, obviously you’d like to do that. But as far as the sit-down component, being comfortable with the interview process, I feel like you get just as much through this type of technology.”

And Rams GM Les Snead believes the old reliable is, well, most reliable this time around.

“We rely on the film more than any other piece of data, in terms of the evaluating,” Snead says. “If you relied on it 90%, maybe you’ve got to rely on the film 94%. If you relied on it 80%, maybe you need to rely on it 88%.”

Red Sox lose draft pick, Cora banned for cheating



Boston Red Sox escaped severe penalties in Major League Baseball's cheating investigation on Wednesday, with Commissioner Rob Manfred concluding that the 2018 World Series champions' sign-stealing efforts were less egregious than the Astros' when they won it all the previous season.

Ex-manager Alex Cora was formally suspended for the coronavirus-delayed 2020 season—but only for his role as Houston's bench coach; Manfred had held off a penalty for Cora despite fingering him as the ringleader of the Astros' sign-stealing operation.

In a statement, Cora said he was "relieved" the investigations were finished and that Manfred found he "did not violate any MLB rules as a member of the Red Sox organization in 2018 or 2019."

"I also take full responsibility for the role I played, along with others, in the Astros' violations of MLB rules in 2017," Cora said. "The collective conduct of the Astros organization in 2017 was unacceptable and I respect and accept the Commissioner's discipline for my past actions."



AP
Boston Red Sox's Jackie Bradley Jr. gets back to first safely on a pickoff attempt to Houston Astros first baseman Nick Tanielu during a spring training baseball game, March 5, 2020, in Fort Myers, Fla.

wipes out the entire 2020 season. Roenicke, who was hired on the eve of spring training after a shotgun job search, is signed only for one year.

"Since we parted ways with Alex, we were clear that that was the result of his role with the Astros. That's still the case," Bloom said. "All the reasons that we parted ways with him then are still the case."

Manfred said in his report that Boston's misdeeds were limited to the regular season and not as pervasive as the Astros', who repeatedly used a video camera in the outfield to steal catchers' signs during their run to the 2017 championship and again the following season.

Manager AJ Hinch and general manager Jeff Luhnow were suspended through the 2020 postseason on Jan. 13 and fired that day by the Astros. Houston was fined \$5 million, the maximum under the Major League Constitution, and lost its next two first and second round amateur draft selections.

"Unlike the Houston Astros' 2017 conduct, in which players communicated to the batter from the dugout area in real time the precise type of pitch about to be thrown, Watkins' conduct, by its very nature, was far more limited in scope and impact," Manfred wrote.

A 30-year-old from Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Watkins is a 2012 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy. The catcher was selected by Boston in the 10th round of that year's amateur draft and played in the Red Sox system until 2015. He declined comment, the Red Sox said.



AP
In this Sept. 20, 2019 file photo, Boston Red Sox manager Alex Cora calls out instructions from the dugout during the 10th inning of a baseball game against the Tampa Bay Rays in St. Petersburg, Fla.

investigation is over.

"We have to earn back trust, and we're prepared to do that," Kennedy said, adding that the team's owners apologized to their counterparts on a confer-

ence call that afternoon. "We recognize that as an organization."

Both Bloom and Kennedy dismissed suggestions that Cora could be welcomed—especially if the coronavirus pandemic

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tributed over 100 boxes containing snacks, cup noodles, and drinks to club players and their families last Wednesday morning at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

"What amazes me more is that coach Jenny, a young and driven lady, would ask members how can she help us, how can she help ease the worries of Rollers parents and their families affected by this crisis," Pangelinan said.

"That shows a lot of maturity, her passion for the sport, and her commitment to the players and the team," Thomas' mother added.

Though new to the group,

the Pangelinans are no stranger to the Rollers, as Alisa's brother, Tom, used to play for coach Joe Diaz's squad.

She said she was her brother's supporter then and now she loves seeing her son's turn to join an amazing program that does not only teach kids about basketball, but also teamwork, determination, and giving back to our community.

Pangelinan added that it's great to see an organization such as the Rollers Basketball Club being around for so many years and proving that they are more than just a basketball group.

"We would like to thank them for their time and dedication in helping our kids and our community," she said.

ager pending the outcome of the investigation.

"That interim tag is removed," chief baseball officer Chaim Bloom said. "Ron is now our manager."

The only member of the Red Sox organization who was penalized was replay system operator J.T. Watkins, who was suspended without pay for a year for violating the prohibition on in-game use of video to identify pitch signals. Watkins, who denied the allegations, was also prohibited from serving as the replay room operator through 2021.

Boston was also stripped of its second-round pick in this year's amateur draft, No. 52 overall.

"To be clear, we're not taking any victory laps. A violation was uncovered and that was wrong and we're being punished for it," Red Sox president Sam Kennedy said on a conference call with reporters, while acknowledging relief that the months-long in-

CAROL

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School graduate has yet to decide which course she will be taking up at Georgia Tech, but said she is interested in business subjects. She also thanked all the people who supported her since she started playing tennis when she was just 5 years old.

"I would like to thank my parents, my friends, my coaches, and the ITF/OTF for supporting me through. I am beyond excited and can't wait to start my new journey in college," Lee said.

With Georgia Tech, Lee will be competing in the elite Atlantic Coast Conference, which has 14 member-schools (in women's tennis only), including No.

HOMETOWN
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

RANKINGS
CAREER-HIGH UTR: 11

WELCOME TO ATLANTA
CAROL LEE

GEORGIA TECH.
WOMEN'S TENNIS

GEORGIA TECH
Georgia Tech welcomes the CNMI's Carol Lee with the news of her signing the letter of intent to play for the Yellow Jackets posted on the team's official website and accompanied with this graphic design.

1 North Carolina (across the U.S./ Intercollegiate Tennis Association ranking as of February 2020), No. 2 Florida State, and No. 7 Duke. The Yellow Jackets were once ranked No. 8 early this year before dropping to No. 10 when the season was suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic. Georgia Tech won its last game (versus Virginia Tech, 6-1 last March 8) before the competition was halted to earn a 15-6 record for the 2019-2020 season.



Mavs, 76ers
made offers
to Bulls for
Jordan

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Saipan Tribune Sports

Gronk healthy
and fire burns
to play with
Brady

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Carol joins Georgia Tech

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI's Carol Lee is officially a member of the Georgia Tech tennis team.

Lee signed the letter of intent to commit to play for the Yellow Jackets last Wednesday night and will be suiting up for the NCAA Division I school for the 2020-2021 season.

"It is such an honor that I will be representing my home, NMI, to play in the NCAA at Georgia Tech," said Lee, who received a full athletic scholarship from the Yellow Jackets.

Lee was recruited by one of Georgia Tech's coaches after scouting her when she played in the U.S. Open's junior qualifying tournament in New York in August last year. Two more Division I schools have also shown interest with the CNMI junior player, but Lee was inclined to sign up with the Yellow Jackets after visiting the campus in Atlanta late last year.

"It was a lot of hard work and a long process but in the end, it was all worth it," the 18-year-old said.

Lee is joining Georgia Tech



after a notable junior career that saw her winning multiple doubles and singles titles in the ITF World Junior Circuit after joining competitions across Asia and Europe, in Australia, New Zealand, Morocco, the U.S., and Mexico, and reigning supreme in Pacific Oceania. She is the lone player in the 21-member nation Oceania Tennis Federation to have clinched the U12, U14, and U16 singles crowns in the Pacific Oceania Junior Championships.

She was ranked as high as No. 114 in the world and has a Universal Tennis Rating of 11. UTR is a global tennis player rating system used to produce an objective, consistent, and accurate index of players' skill. Lee is the first CNMI player to have



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Carol Lee attempts a baseline return during an ITF World Junior tournament in South Korea late last year.

competed in the main draw of both the U.S. Open and Australian Open (juniors division).

Georgia Tech's athletics website has announced the signing of Lee, along with its

three other new recruits—Mahak Jain (Bhopal, India), Ava Hrastar (Duluth, Ga.), and Ruth Marsh (Atlanta, Ga.).

"Carol possesses the qualities we feel are essential to

play at this level," Georgia Tech women's tennis head coach Rodney Harmon was quoted as saying in the Yellow Jackets' website. "We are excited to welcome her to the

Yellow Jacket family. I am confident Carol will be successful both on the court and in the classroom."

The Saipan Community
See CAROL on Page 23



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Payton Thomas Pangelinan poses with some of the relief goods he and his family received from Rollers Basketball Club coach Jenny Lee and Dong A Wholesale.

Rollers: Developing a sense of family

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

New Rollers Basketball Club members Alisa and Payton

Thomas Pangelinan were beyond grateful for receiving relief goods from RBC coach Jenny Lee and her company



Dong A Wholesale.

Alisa, whose son Thomas plays for the Rollers U12 Team, felt the sense of family in

the club, especially during these trying times.

"Payton and I are still pretty new to the organization, but they have welcomed us with bright smiles, encouraging words, and a sense of family," Pangelinan said.

"We are currently facing challenging times and the food donations that coach Jenny and her company handed out to the Rollers family is much needed. It is like saying a little goes a long way," she added.

Lee with the help for Rollers officials and volunteers, and Dong A Wholesale dis-

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Rollers Basketball Club coach Jenny Lee, right, hands over relief packages to Rollers player Terry Diaz last Wednesday at the Koblerville Gymnasium.